

RESORT/LEISURE MINISTRIES TEAM
COLORADO BAPTIST GENERAL CONVENTION

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Church Based Resort and Leisure Ministry is essential to the growth of the Kingdom locally and world-wide. People in a resort or leisure setting are relaxed and are many times more open to the Gospel than they would be at home where their defenses are high. We see this defensiveness in the numerous gated or closed communities throughout our nation. While the affluent society has locked themselves behind gates for many years, it is now becoming prevalent even in middle class developments. One of the characteristics of this affluent, even middle class, lifestyle is recreation. Often within these gated communities we find golf courses and tennis clubs, swimming pools and bike paths. Where these facilities may not be present within the gates, the residents will usually find a club or course near them that is frequented by others of their socio/economic cluster. They may even frequent the same ski areas and resorts. It is difficult to gain access to these particular communities or people groups and yet they need to have opportunity to respond to the message of salvation in Jesus Christ. One of the ways we can access this particular people group is through their recreational pursuits. We must be intentional in developing a strategy to reach people in their leisure settings. This means joining Country Clubs and Health Clubs; it means being in the parks and shopping malls; it means being on the ski slopes, at the Lakes, on the mountain bike trails and the hiking trails -- intentionally. We can have the opportunity to build relationships and to present the Gospel if we are in those places and about the Father's business, especially if we are helping people to enjoy life by being a blessing to them. We believe that we have the real answer to abundant life. This is what people are seeking. At a mountain top Easter Service the preacher was sharing about "Extreme Spirituality". His premise is that people are involved in "extreme" pursuits of all kinds; extreme skiing, extreme biking, extreme jumping, etc.. The people involved in these extreme pursuits do not have a death wish as some would have us believe, but a life wish. They want to live life to the fullest - abundantly. We can help them achieve this. Jesus said I come to give life and life abundantly. We must be out amongst the populace, involved in their lives in order to have the opportunity to lead them to the abundance of Jesus Christ. We must be intentional in developing a world wide strategy to reach people in their leisure settings. Southern Baptists have the systems in place to do this effectively. We can be the leaders in this and touch lives that no one has been able to before. We can establish evangelical discipling churches where there are none today.

There have been many models of Resort Ministry through out the United States. Most are project based and last for the time period of the special project or event and then disappear. If someone is saved, they have little hope of further guidance unless they make special effort to find a church and avail themselves of the discipleship training. For this reason most pastors and church leaders have come to see resort ministries as a drain on resources and a burden to the church, not producing many lasting results. I believe there is a better way. I believe that when resort ministry is church based resort ministry, with a very broad target group, churches are started and strengthened. Church based resort ministry has Biblical precedence.

"When Jesus came into the world there existed no such thing as the Church."¹³ As Christ established the church it was unlike anything that had gone on before. It is not the reorganization of the synagogue. It is not another children of Israel wandering around in the wilderness. It is Christ, alive in the world through those He has chosen. We, the Church, are those called out of the world to be indwelt by the Living Powerful Holy Spirit of God. We are the Body of Christ empowered by His eternal Holy Spirit. As Christ walked on the earth so we are designed and empowered to walk on the earth. We first see the word Church mentioned in Matthew 16:14. The text reads as follows: _

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"¹⁴ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah

or one of the prophets." 15 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."ⁱⁱ

This is important in the overall understanding of missions and resort missions in particular. Christ asked the question: "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" That is the question of the Church since then. It was the answer that established us (the Church) as the Church. "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." That is still the correct answer for the true Church today.

"The Church is not merely to exist in this world; God has work for it to do. The Church is to glorify God, to evangelize the world and to edify believers. These are its primary tasks."ⁱⁱⁱ

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."^{iv}

The Apostles were sent out from and by Christ, the head of the Church. The Disciples took this seriously and we see churches established in many of the towns around Jerusalem and then, through out the world. This establishing of the church, the local body of Christ, is extremely important to us in Resort Missions. We see that Paul and others were sent out from the church, the living Body of Christ and reported back to the church. Missions and ministry should always done in association with a local church. If missions and ministry is done through a local church, then we have opportunity to baptize and disciple, to edify the body. Resort Missions and Ministry should follow this Biblical principle in beginning and growing churches. Because of the transient nature of resort areas the local church will need to make extra effort in establishing people in churches around the world. This gives resort area churches doing resort style missions and ministry a strategic role in world wide evangelism and church planting.

"The Church lives with two identities. First, it is the remnant that God has chosen, sanctified and commissioned to be a blessing to the world."^v What a great commission to be a blessing to people. It is helping people enjoy the abundance of life. What better place to be a blessing to the world than in a resort setting. "Second, it is the Body of Christ that must fulfill His ministry in the World."^{vi} Christ set the example for Paul and others to follow in going to where the people are. We see Christ down by the lake visiting and walking among the fishermen and others that naturally gathered there. We see Him going into the synagogue, a gathering place for people. We see Him walking through the streets visiting with children and others. When there was a gathering on the mountainside, He shared with them. If the gathering was on the sea shore He shared with them. Where ever there were groups of people gathered for rest, relaxation or recreation we see Jesus sharing Himself with them. Since we, the church, are the living empowered body of Christ it follows that we will be intentionally involved in sharing His saving life with others.

When the people in a local resort church are committed to the truth that they are to be witnesses of Christ, they will be witnesses in the resort environment because that is where they work and play. Sharing Christ and doing ministry in a resort environment should impact all strata of that environment; the full time local people, the second home owners, the short and long term guest, the seasonal employee, as well as the commuting employee. The desire to share Christ with others is the supernatural state of the Christian mind and heart. Resort Ministries is the intentional development of this supernatural state in settings where people congregate during their leisure time. It was this supernatural state of being that caused Paul to write in his letter to the Corinthian Church:

“19 Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. 20 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. 21 To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. 23 I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.”^{vii}

Paul stated that he was very intentional and purposeful in his need and efforts to share Jesus. He recognized that there are many people groups and that it would take a different approach to each to be able to share Jesus effectively. Paul (the missionary church planter) operated from the supernatural state of the Christian, intentionally becoming all things to all men that he might by all means save some.

. Church Based Resort and Leisure Ministries is a Biblically sound theology.

Colorado's Strategy for Resort and Leisure Ministries

ALPINE RESORT MINISTRIES is a state wide ministry that can be recognized by people as they travel throughout the state. If a family is traveling and becomes involved with a Day Camp at **ALPINE RESORT MINISTRIES**-Estes Park the first part of their week, then travels to Telluride for the last half of the week, they might see a concert on Friday night sponsored by the **ALPINE RESORT MINISTRIES**-Telluride. Many visitors to our state come back year after year and like to visit different areas each time. As **ARM** grows we receive more wide spread recognition. We hope that people look for the **ARM** logo knowing they can count on good family ministry and a dynamic Christian witness. **ARM** is designed to be a ministry of the local church. Therefore, any **ARM** ministry begun would need to reflect local identity. A few good examples are: **ALPINE RESORT MINISTRIES**-Summit County, sponsored by Agape Outpost, Alpine Baptist Church and Copper Mountain Community Church; **ALPINE RESORT MINISTRIES**-Crested Butte, sponsored by the Oh-Be-Joyful Baptist Church; and the **ALPINE RESORT MINISTRIES**-Grand Mesa sponsored by the Uncompahgre and Grand Valley Baptist Associations. **ALPINE RESORT MINISTRIES** - Vail sponsored by the Trinity Baptist Church and there are many other examples.

The reasons for ALPINE RESORT MINISTRIES are threefold.

First, to evangelize. We have a growing number of people leaving the cities and towns to escape to the mountains, the lakes, the parks, the fairs, the rodeos, the rivers and other places of special interest here in our beautiful state. We need to find some way to share the saving knowledge of Jesus with those who are lost.

Second, we exist to help plant churches in resort communities where there is no church and to assist those areas where there are churches, in church growth.

Third, we are here to minister in the name of Jesus to the masses of visitors, guests and home folk that need the love of the Good Shepherd as He wraps His arms around His sheep.

Too often as we think about resort ministries we see only the glamour points such as Vail, Aspen, Winter Park and Telluride. It is important to rid ourselves of that concept and look further to Rifle, New Castle, Meeker, Saguache, La Veta, Pueblo, Colorado Springs and Denver. Not that these last are our only target areas but rather a composite of the types of places that do have people in leisure settings that can be reached. County fairs, state fairs, state parks, city parks, amusement parks, lakes, event centers - **anyplace where people congregate in large numbers to spend leisure time is a potential place of ministry.**

ALPINE RESORT MINISTRIES has been formed to be the catalyst for these types of opportunities. We want to help churches in "resort/leisure" settings be able to better reach their communities. One of the responsibilities of **ARM** is to develop a comprehensive strategy of resort/leisure ministries in Colorado in order to further the goals of the Colorado Baptist Convention in evangelism, church growth, church planting and to minister to people in their leisure activity. It is further our purpose to plan and conduct training and motivational events to equip churches and associations for resort/leisure ministries, and to prepare and distribute resort/leisure missions material.

The resort communities of Colorado; Aspen, Beaver Creek, Breckenridge, Buena Vista, Copper Mountain, Crested Butte, Gunnison, Dillon, Edwards, Estes Park, Winter Park, Vail, and others, are strategically poised to be the catalyst for the spread of the Gospel to the United States and to the World.

ⁱ The Doctrine of the Church, W. A. Criswell; Convention Press, Nashville Tennessee ; page 30

ⁱⁱ The Bible, New International Translation; Matthew 16:13-18

ⁱⁱⁱ Major Biblical Doctrines, A. H. Yetter; The Good News Broadcasting Company, Lincoln Nebraska; page 89

^{iv} The Bible, New International Translation; Matthew 28:19-20

^v The Biblical Basis of Missions, Avery T. Willis Jr.; Convention Press, Nashville Tennessee; page 71

^{vi} The Biblical Basis of Missions, Avery T. Willis Jr.; Convention Press, Nashville Tennessee; page 71

^{vii} The Bible, New International Translation; Ist Corinthians 9:19-23

Other good resources

A Christian Ministry in Resort and Leisure Settings, Pete Owen, Chaplain, Dollywood, Tennessee.

The notebook used at the Rocky Mountain Resort/ Ministries Institute, Colorado Baptist General Convention