

Securing Secular Settings For Ministry

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The adventure of securing secular settings for ministry purposes is exciting, demanding, and rewarding. Discovering and building relationships and structures that enable the Good News of Jesus to be heard provides great validation for personal ministry and resort missions in general.

This adventure is not without its negative aspects. From the view of those who live and work in the secular realm, you and your ministry ideas may seem simply irrelevant to life. Their attitude often is not so much one of direct rejection as it is of "So what?" The Church and its leaders are also often the source of negative attitudes. Many times their lack of understanding of who you are and what you are trying to do reveals itself through judgmental pronouncements concerning the resort, feelings of being threatened by your work, or that famous uncaring remark about "suffering for Jesus."

There are great positive experiences to working in secular settings, however. They stand as fresh places to reveal God's presence and to contact individuals in need. The secular society is generally direct and honest about its response. Further, there is no limit on opportunity for creativity. Secular settings provide a wonderful place to surprise people with the love of God.

Pete Owen provides some keys to preparing yourself for working in secular settings: (1) be sure of your call, (2) be sure of your purpose, (3) be patient, (4) be self confident, (5) be creative, and (6) have a prayerful, supportive congregation backing you.

Our purpose and right to be there are caught up in our desire to meet the needs of the people living, working, and playing in those secular resort settings. We must discover those needs. Further, we must be honest about our own needs and goals. Resort ministry people and programs can enhance the job performance of secular resort industry workers and the resort experience off its visitors. Even as we are motivated by the directives of Jesus to proclaim the Gospel to all of the world, these are our greatest selling points.

The following material will help us in securing secular settings:

Dealing with owners/management

•Pressures faced by owners and/or management

- Financial
- Personnel
- Operational
- Personal
- Family

•Contact points

- Owner
- General manager
- Personnel director

- Marketing director
- Special events director
- Community authorities
- Contact times
 - Off season planning
 - Start of season
 - Grand openings
 - Special events
 - Significant moments
 - Crisis times
- How to approach
 - Make a positive statement about yourself
 - Make appointment(s)
 - Be organized
 - Meet personally and in writing
 - Listen
 - Discuss how you and your program ideas relate
 - Begin where they are
- How to maintain
 - Do quality work
 - Give something for nothing: Enhance
 - Follow through in terms of relationships and programs
 - Show care over time
 - Keep information channels open and flowing
 - Use their facilities
 - Relate to all work levels
 - Include management in evaluation and planning

Adapted from an article by Bill Black in the 1993 National Resort Ministries Conference notebook. Used by permission.