

Crisis Intervention

Dan Holzer

Introduction

There are two basic types of resort areas. First, there are those that are based close to large metropolitan areas such as Honolulu. These areas, because of their location, will have relatively sophisticated crisis intervention programs such as suicide hotlines, well-developed medical services, drug treatment programs, etc. To minister in these areas, the church needs to work with existing crisis systems in the community. We have found that there are ministry opportunities in these systems if churches are willing to participate in the existing structures.

Many of these programs survive by volunteer labor, and churches can become valuable resources to these programs. These systems are designed to train and equip volunteers for all aspects of their programs. Volunteers can bring their Christian background to and minister within the existing systems. I would recommend that churches resort areas, such as we have just mentioned, become familiar with the available programs. These programs and the church can complement each other in their concern for the community.

The second type of resort area is usually smaller and isolated from large metropolitan areas. The need for crisis intervention of all types is great year-round in these areas. Because of their size and lack of funding, these areas are even more dependent on volunteers. I feel that the churches located in these areas have an even greater responsibility to either start new programs or help staff existing programs. The church can meet the physical needs of these programs by providing a plan for them to meet. The church can also provide volunteers and funding. The church has many valuable resources to offer these programs, but the greatest of these is our spiritual concern for individuals.

The church that is not involved with the crisis needs in a small community is a church that is not in tune or concerned for its community. It is often in the crisis situations of life that people become aware of their own weaknesses and their need for God. It is in these moments that Christian volunteers have a great impact on individual lives.

Types of Crises

Crises come in a variety of ways in a resort area. They come, not only from the people who visit the area, but from the local population as well. Crises can come from the foolishness of mankind or from the severity of nature. One thing is for sure, though, crises will come. The church can minister in these situations if it is willing. The types of crises that will come are as varied as the individuals who make up the area. We have found, from living in a small area, that we don't have the luxury of having experts to care for the physical and emotional needs of people. Yet, we can fill the gap and stabilize the situation until they are returned to a more sophisticated system. It is to this end that we must prepare ourselves. An example of this is that most small areas cannot support therapists to deal with the emotional needs of people. To deal with this need, ministers can be trained before they come to a resort area.

Other examples of crisis ministries that the church can be involved in are:

1. Alcoholics Anonymous
2. Narcotics Anonymous

3. Gamblers Anonymous
4. Al-Anon
5. Overeaters Anonymous
6. Mental health programs
7. Ski ministry
8. Disaster relief
9. Food vouchers—the county often has resources
10. Take an interdenominational approach by working through the local ministerial association.
11. Suicide prevention
12. Work with local hospital or clinic
13. Work with abuse and rape centers

In all of the above areas, we have been well received and have found that as we have cared for the physical and emotional needs of people, it become possible to help them obtain spiritual wholeness through Jesus Christ.

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