

MAKING CASE STATEMENTS

1. **"The case" already exists.** You do not have to invent your congregation's mission, passion, objectives, or purpose. Nor do you have to create those same feelings inside congregation members. Your task is to connect members' inner motivation to fulfill God's will in their lives with elements of the congregation's mission.

2. **The case is factual.** The compelling opportunities your congregation faces (including the needs you fill), and the overwhelming assets you have been given to accomplish God's will – they can all be expressed in factual terms. Numbers, places, people, quantifiable data.

3. **The case is spiritual.** At the same time, "the case" is a spiritual matter framed by the question each believer faces every day, "Lord, what would you have me do?" The Spirit's gifts compel you to assemble emotion, facts and the motivation for specific ministries.

4. **You can discover the case.** Start with your knowledge of congregation members' sincere passions for their lives and this congregation. What do they want to do in order to fulfill God's purposes? Next, look at the congregation's documents, history and artifacts to see how the mission of the congregation matches members' spiritual yearnings for their lives. These are your resources for developing a "case statement."

5. **Ask questions before making statements.** An accurate and compelling case statement starts with good questions, such as:

- What is central to our faith, our lives and our work together?
- What is it about our God that compels us to action?
- What is important about what is done with and through your congregation?
- What happens in God's realm because we are here?
- What are your unique competencies and assets for doing God's will?
- What benefits accrue to your members and donors?
- What values do donors fulfill by giving to your ministry?
- What motivates donors?
- What is unique to your congregation's mission?

Answer the above questions and you will have the substance to write an effective case statement.

6. **A case statement has multiple benefits.** Although its major purpose is to encourage givers, a case statement also serves as a basis for evaluation, prioritizing and decision-making in your congregation. A case statement can also:

- Attract donors who are not members but value the congregation's mission.
- Project competence and excellence.
- Focus and unify the process of asking for contributions.
- Enlist leadership.
- Provide basic language for fund-raising materials

7. **A case statement must be complete and concise.** The case for giving can include the mission, goals, objectives, programs, key participants, facilities and equipment, and history of your congregation. Each element should be presented in clear, concise language that can be understood by all donors. Donors should readily understand what your congregation desires, what's in place, what happens because of your life together, what is your congregation's character and strength, the validity and credibility of your history, and what contributions will accomplish.

What is the case statement for your ministry? Take some time to think through a brief statement that will help with your invitation to members this fall.

From Salt Seasonings, August 2005

Legal Stuff...© 2005 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Any part of Salt Seasonings can be reproduced with attribution. All Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (NRSV).