

C H A P T E R 3

## The Crisis of Crisis Giving

Emergency!

Help!

S.O.S.!

“This is a faith ministry and if you don’t send cash now, we’re going under!”

We have all heard these emergency requests for money coming from our televisions, radios, mailboxes, and to a lesser degree our churches. I suppose there are real emergencies that require prompt giving. But the frantic requests we usually receive aren’t because of a tsunami, earthquake, or famine. On the contrary, our emergency solicitations are frequently to pay routine bills.

It is well-known in marketing that sex sells. Do you want to sell a car, some toothpaste, or a gallon of milk? Breasts, thighs, and a nice behind will work every time. Similarly, in the church it is well-known that crises sell. Some ministries are sustained, and some even thrive, on crisis giving. Christians should ask two questions when presented with a crisis request.

First, is the crisis real? Often preachers exaggerate to get us to give more and to give quicker. Take your hand off your wallet, step away from the ATM, and study the situation before giving. Who is making the request? Is the minister known for moderate living and sacrificial giving? Or is he known for his collection of homes, cars, and expensive suits?