POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO MANAGEMENT

--How could you go about approaching your management about establishing a religion-based group in your workplace?

--How do you lessen management's concerns about allowing religious groups?

--How do you answer answer the arguments from companies that have not allowed religious groups out of fear that it was the same as allowing political groups that automatically oppose one another?

--What do you say when they cite the potentially infinite number of religions and the divisiveness inherent in trying to accommodate their widely disparate views?

1. Make a business case for your proposal. Studies by the respected Society for HR Management have shown that providing religious accommodations (including designated areas for employees to use for religious practices like prayer and the establishment of relgion-based groups) have led to increased employee morale, retention and loyalty -- while at the same time enhancing the organization's reputation.

2. Tell them there are many respected companies like AOL, Unisys, Oracle, Ford Motor, Boeing and Accenture; government entities; non profits; military; and educational institutions that allow and support religious groups in their workplaces.

3. Say this would be similar to their already-established "affinity" groups for females, Blacks, Hispanics, gays, Asians, etc.

4. However, if calling religious groups "affinity" groups meets with HR or management resistance, tell them religious groups need not be labeled "affinity" groups like their other long-established groups.

5. Most public companies already proudly cite how the "diversity" of their established gender, race and ethnic affinity groups have fostered increased understanding. Why would religious groups be any different? For that matter, why wouldn't they be even better? All the major religions of the world subscribe to the Golden Rule -- what company could argue against following the Golden Rule?

6. A follow-up request could be to allow "faith" groups to meet in the workplace during non business hours. Boeing, for example, allows "Christian Fellowships" to meet in the workplace.

7. Be all-inclusive. In this age of political correctness and/or being fair & balanced, managements don't want to favor one group over another. For example, the man who demanded he be allowed to form a Christian group at General Motors was rebuffed by GM and the courts because he excluded other religious groups. Suggest the organization could allow the formation of an interrelgious council with members from all religions where people could come together to discuss their beliefs.

8. Make sure you say any religion that wished (Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, etc.) should form their own separate religious groups as well.

9. It would be wise to draw up a set of principles beforehand under which your group would intend to operate. That template that could be offered, with editing, as a guideline for non Christian groups as well.
Principles to highlight would be:
--Religion-based groups promote harmony in the workplace.
--Participation is voluntary and open to all employees.
--All groups have equal access to company meeting rooms, media and email.

By including some or all of these points, you would have answered most of the common objections put forward by management to the establishment of religious groups in the workplace.