



Dear Abby

Solicitor pests need a gentle swat

ABIGAIL VAN BUREN Syndicated Columnist

DEAR ABBY: "Hounded in British Columbia" (May 22) asked you how to discourage religious solicitors. What many people may not realize is that once you accept a piece of literature or have a long conversation with the person, that person will note your name and address so they can "return visit" you. Then not only will you be visited by others in their religion, but the person who gave you the literature will start calling on you, hoping to engage you in religious conversations and Bible study.

The most effective way to discourage these visits is to politely say you're not interested as quickly as possible. Do not take any literature or engage in any discussion. You should also tell them to note on their "territory card" that you want no more calls at your house in the future. This can be done kindly and with a smile. — DOOR KNOCKER IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR DOOR KNOCKER: Thank you for the inside information. Requesting that you be placed on the "No Call" list seems simple enough and can be done politely. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: I was faithful going door-to-door representing my church. And I agree that people have to be firm with someone who is truly hounding them. These solicitors believe they are doing the will of God and are taught that they may be "persecuted" for their faith. I can no longer stand going door-to-door, but people who do it deserve respect and a straightforward answer. — FORMER RELIGIOUS SOLICITOR

DEAR FORMER RELIGIOUS SOLICITOR: Then it's clear to you how offended some people become when some solicitors won't take "no" for an answer. Many readers offered solutions to handling the intrusion:

DEAR ABBY: May I share my method? As soon as I heard the words "Jehovah's Witness," I simply said, "I'm sorry, but I didn't see the accident," and closed my door. — AMY IN THE SOUTHWEST

DEAR ABBY: I told the solicitors I would gladly listen to everything they had to say for 50 minutes, and I charge only \$40. Cash, please. As first they were confused, but I explained that this is what my time is worth. They never returned. — JUDY IN NEVADA

DEAR ABBY: We hung this sign on our front door, "We love our vacuum, we've found God, and we gave at the office!" This worked for us. — LESLIE IN THE WEST

DEAR ABBY: A friend of mine had a unique solution to dissuade religious visitors from dropping by. She told them she was a practicing witch. She said they couldn't leave fast enough. — CINDY IN OHIO

Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



