

# PROPAGANDA

Don't you just love it when religious people hand you stuff on the street? That great, cheap, tradition of making more trash by giving away pieces of paper that will be tossed away as quickly as they can be handed out. There is a story about a guy who was handing out literature to passerby, only to watch them wad up his fliers and chuck them into the gutter. Frustrated, he decided he'd save them the trouble: he began to crumple up the papers himself before handing them out. As the story goes, people became suddenly intrigued by the man's message and carefully un-crumpled the pages before reading them with interest. *Strange.*

The lesson here is not about guerrilla marketing and how much more effective a crumpled flyer is. It's that people are tired of being bombarded with impersonal, unimpressive, seemingly impotent information. We sympathize. Religious marketing can be all these things, and worse.

But there is no question that people who have had an authentic encounter with a character like Jesus are compelled by that experience to share the story with others.

God has changed some pretty awful folks (some we know intimately, if you know what we mean) into people on the way to a kind of glory. Strange that it is so hard to communicate that change. What would it be like to really put into words the experience and the effect of encountering God? Even the greatest of words couldn't possibly suffice. But we try, and people run for their lives. This is also strange. After all, you can doubt the authenticity of a story, but doubt doesn't really explain why some people so passionately avoid exploring the claims of believers.

We can't deny the fact that we want to propagate our faith: we're guilty as charged. We want to infect the world with the Good Disease. No question. You are not safe from our desire to see you saved from a life without God. We may try to be respectful, not invade your space, you know ... let you be. But we don't really want to let you be. Sorry. You have every right to wad this up and chuck it in the gutter, but we want you to get that it is worth the humiliation for us to hand it to you, because we believe what we're saying.

*Strange, but true.*