

Amazing Fundraising in Cherry Hill, New Jersey in 1977

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When I was on my own in 1977 selling Il Hwa wholesale during the day and fundraising in the evening to cover expenses. I ended up in Cherry Hill, New Jersey a little after 5 pm. It was too late to try to find any health food stores and the town had such a nice name that I decided to start fundraising a bit early when I saw a cluster of brick apartment buildings. Unfortunately, no one spoke English and no one had money. I believe they were very poor Russian immigrants - only women were home.

Finally after about 30 minutes with only one donation of 25 cents, I met a woman who spoke English. She asked to see some ID, and I showed her my church ID card in my wallet. She took my wallet, invited me inside, and called the police. Then she asked me to sit and wait "while we got to the bottom of this." She was the manager for the apartments. I wanted to just take off, but she had my wallet with all my ID.

She offered me some pie while we waited. As I sat in a chair and ate, she poured out her heart about her disappointment with her son, about my age, who had fled to Canada rather than serve in the military during Vietnam. She herself had sacrificed during a six-year separation while her husband had been in the Navy during WWII, for the benefit of the future generations and now her son had made all that unnecessary. I could clearly see the anguish in her heart.

Then a policeman arrived and she did a 180 degree change, pointing at me and telling him in a snarling voice, "There he is; lock him up!" while handing him my wallet.

Actually, it was good that she did this, for he told her he knew how to do his job. Once we were outside, he gave me back my wallet and told me the city did not allow soliciting after 5:00 pm. And we went our separate ways.