

Fallen world normal and Moonie normal - Original World Products

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Photo date and location unknown

We were determined not to do anything to the 'fallen world standard'.

So our normal was not everyone else's normal.

When I first did a mall booth at Christmas for Original World Products, of course I worked it every single hour the mall was open, 7 days a week. At that time, we did not hire other employees and exactly one member was sent to each location.

Now, I know some people love malls, the crowds, the stores. Me, I'd rather sit under a pine tree. Malls sap my energy every moment I'm inside one. But I had spent hours running around cold parking lots wishing I was working inside somewhere.

Being the lone worker meant asking someone working nearby to watch my booth as I sprinted to the restroom and back. Lunch meant sprinting to the food court and back. After weeks of Chick Fila and pizzas, I discovered that the GNC had frozen wheat grass juice. Have you ever drank something and felt the vitamins going straight into your bloodstream?

When mall hours stretched to 9am to 10 pm, the only time I saw the sun was when I was going into work. It got pretty hard to stay fresh. Fundraising shop to shop, when I got stale I could just go in and say "I'm

fundraising for the Unification Church. You know, Reverend Moon's church?" and wait for them to start yelling. Here, we weren't to discuss religion at all on the job. Just watch the shuffling hordes of shoppers go by.

After a couple of days I wanted to stand up on a bench and yell "Hey everybody! I'm a Moonie!!" But of course, I couldn't. In those days, being 'found out' meant likely being kicked out of the mall. The mall management might have known, but they also knew to keep it quiet or risk a big community backlash.

Once, in a mall in Mobile, Alabama, a young man came up to my booth.

"What company is this?"

"Creative Originals."

"Oh. Is there a cause you are selling for?"

"No, it's a business."

"Because these wood roses, I used to sell them for my church."

"Oh, really."

"Yes." Pause. "The Unification Church."

As if I didn't know.

"This is just a business."

"I see."

It kind of broke my heart to say that, but I had no way of knowing if he was a) still a member, b) positive and naïve enough to tell all his friends, or c) negative and dying to make trouble. It's easy now to think "Aw, should have just told him you were a member." Back then, having your business shut down, windows broken, yourself threatened with knives, guns or fists were common occurrences.

He was obviously less than convinced, but we were under strict orders. We were not treated as regular citizens in those days.

When the day was finished, cover up the booth, empty out the cash box and credit card slips, head back to your hotel room. Call in your result, Pray, sleep, repeat.

In Mobile, the mall was flooded by heavy rains and closed down completely. I set up in front of the main doors and sold to people who sloshed through the parking lot only to find the place was closed.

On Thanksgiving, we were expected to find a corner and sell on it. Same for Christmas. Then you found a Waffle House or Chinese restaurant to eat at.

These were pretty normal for us. What was your 'Moonie normal'?