

## **MFT: Hello, I am raising funds for a program to teach young people how to live a life of faith in Christ**

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I decided to join the Unification Church in San Francisco, California. It was late summer of 1976, shortly after my 28th birthday. Within less than a year I found myself fundraising in Michigan with a Mobile Flower (sic) Team (MFT). I was not the best fundraiser on any team. In fact one day I came back to the van with less than a dollar in change given to me by an elderly lady who had very little but gave anyway. I learned to look for meaning within each experience because I was desperate to know the heart of God. The small change given to me on that challenging day going door to door in a Detroit ghetto reminded me of the "widow's mite" in one of the stories in the New Testament. Jesus observed that in giving all that she had, the widow had given more from the heart than the wealthier donors. At the end of that day I prayed with all my heart that God could accept the widow's mite and my tiny results.

One morning in early December of 1977, nearly 40 years ago as I now recall, I was dropped off in a large mall parking lot near Holland, Michigan. One of my companions that day was a large box of wrapped dozens of beautiful, fresh smelling long

stemmed red roses. The other companion was large bucket containing singles and doubles to be sold at one for three and two for five dollars. My mission was to sell out everything by 5 pm. At that point I had never made more than \$100 in a day of fundraising and the notion of selling all these roses was overwhelming to me. I prayed for strength and for a miracle, asking my Heavenly Father, "How can I accomplish this thing for You?" A flash of inspiration came to me in the form of a strong thought... "I am raising funds for a program that helps young people learn to live a life of faith in Christ." It was that simple.

Starting slowly to approach shoppers who were returning to their cars in the lot, I began greeting them with a smile and a hello and a simple phrase. "Hello, I am raising funds for a program to teach young people how to live a life of faith in Christ." At first it felt really awkward, but the more I thought about it, that is exactly what I was doing. I was practicing a life of putting my faith in Christ by fundraising and believing in our cause. My mind and heart of motivation became one. A few people began taking the roses and giving me \$3 and \$5 donations. They smiled and thanked me. It seemed amazing to me and I felt stronger as the hours went by. Soon I was all out of small bunches and had to "graduate" to the wrapped dozens, asking \$20 for each dozen. Once again I felt so awkward asking for such a big donation, yet as I pushed myself the words became more natural. Suddenly it began snowing, I lost track of time as I went from car to car asking people to help support our programs to help young people live a life of faith in Christ. The roses seemed to fly out of my hands and people kept giving me twenty dollars and thanking me for my work!

I still had a lot of roses left in the box of dozens when I grew so hungry I had to stop for lunch. Worried that I would lose momentum, I apologized to God for taking a break and promised I would take no more than a half an hour. The snow kept falling as I ordered a hamburger at Wendy's, and watched the clock on the wall as I ate lunch. The hands of the clock seemed to stand still and 15 minutes seemed to me like half an hour. Back out on the parking lot, the energy and excitement I felt just became more intense as I ran from car to car calling out the words, "Life of faith in Christ, life of faith in Christ!" I no longer could remember the whole sentence but it seemed as if I did not even need to say much. People kept giving me \$20s until the last bunch was gone at 4:55 pm.

When we counted the results I had brought in over \$400, which was astounding to me given my previous poor performances. The lesson I learned was that we can mobilize the good spiritual world by uniting our hearts and minds with a noble purpose and acting on that purpose with total investment.