

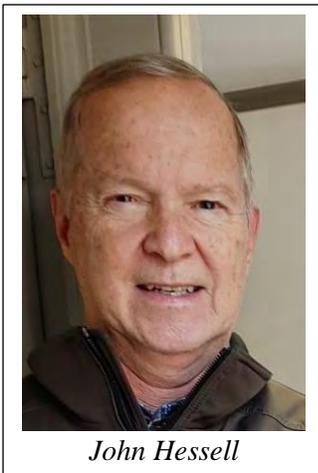
Unification Church of Bronx, NY's first fundraising team - January 1972

John Hessel
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The Unification Church of Bronx, NY's first fundraising team - John Hessel is standing next to a sister

In the early 1970s, Philip and Vivien Burley were the leaders of the Bronx church, which was on the west side at 3000 Netherland Ave. There were about 20 of us at the center, except when True Parents came in preparation for the three-day Lincoln Center speech at Alice Tully Hall. About that time, Philip asked eight of us to quit our jobs and form a fundraising team. We made candles in the garage, filling glasses with hot wax, color, and scent, and poked in a wick as the top cooled and hardened.



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This was a big gamble, since our salaries were important to the operation of the church center. Philip asked me to lead the team, and said to me: "If this works, you will get the credit. If it doesn't, I will get the blame". It worked.

In New York City, there was a sidewalk game called three card Monty, where a man with three playing cards would shuffle them around a piece of cardboard placed on a garbage can, and say "Where's the Ace?" As he shuffled the cards, his secret partner would pretend to be a passerby, and would bet \$10 that he could follow the ace as the dealer moved the card around. He would lose an easy one, and then intended audience would think it was simple to follow, and jump in to make an easy 10 bucks, but they would usually lose.

We would huddle to pray in the morning on 34th St. in front of Macy's before starting the day and, as we prayed, we could feel other people's breath on our necks and bodies, pushing our shoulders as they leaned in to see what we were looking down at. Sorry, no Three-card Monty here!

I would park the van on 33rd St while we fundraised at 34th and Broadway. One time, as I headed for the van to get more product, I saw it moving down the street, with the front end up in the air behind a tow truck. Due to heavy traffic, I was able to run and catch up with the truck. I jumped up on the step at the driver's door, and told the driver, "Sir, you can't take this van! This is a church van, and we are using it to raise funds for our church. If you do this, it's like taking money out of the offering basket!" This elderly black man thought for minute, and said, "Boy, the Lord was with you today," and he released the van.