

BIBLE STUDY AT THE SALVATION ARMY

Early in the day, I e-mail Glasco to ask whether BS would be held. He answered, from his Blackberry {!} that it was.

I got out of the subway at 135th at 5:45, somewhat early and walked to Powell on 136th and back to Lenox on 137th. The latter block felt quite “gritty” with loud music, teenagers slouching. I noticed that about all doors had, taped on them, Baby College flyers. {It seems to imply that those who put up the flyer could not get into the buildings}

167P
174P
175P

I entered the SA buidling at about 5:57. Very crowded with parents and kids getting out.

[we must get a list of these programs]

629

It does not take me more than a few seconds to catch the eye of a man, mouth “Bible Study” while pointing in the direction of the sanctuary, we both nod, and I walk through the door.

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{this was very simple indeed. We must be careful not to confuse our own insecurities and uncertainties with strong protection. With a good excuse it is easy to “pass” into and as any number of spaces/positions/standings}

When I walk into the sanctuary there are three persons. Quiet. I notice that the cross has been moved to the back center of the stage, with a white shawl artfully draped on the arms. The pulpit has been moved and the screen is lowered from the ceiling. A sign says “Maximum Occupancy 305”

{evidence that this space is open to reconfiguration. }
[The legal occupancy sign is interesting as I do not think I have ever seen one in a “church”: does this mean this is not considered by the City as one but as a hall?]

6:04 Becky (I used to think she was called ‘Joy’ but found out different later today) and Soan come in. Both notice me, nod and smile. Becky “hello, nice to see you again. I remember when you were here before.” She goes back out and, when she returns, sits in front of me. During that time Soan has gone to the piano and started improvising.

6:13 Glasco comes in and sits in a pew, head bowed as Soan continues playing.

5:15 G. stands: "Let us pray" looks at me "Hello Herve"

{(=lecture starts=)}

"To day .. A concept known in psychological circles as the 'self-fulfilling prophecy' that has meaning for us. Who knows what this is?"

Everyone seems to nod or say 'yes' softly.

While this is starting more people have come in. There are now as people in attendance, 2 men and 10 women.

"Let's turn to Habbakkuk 2 1-3. A minor prophet. What are prophets? What do they do?"

Several answers "the tell the future" "Not quite" "they speak for God"

"What is a rampart?" Few seem to know the answer and he gives it.

"Any of you see yourself as a watchman?"

"Let's go out to the street and watch. We'll do this for three minutes and then come back in to discuss."

G. leads us out through the door closest to the sanctuary and we stand, most people leaning against the wall. My observation is that people walking on Lenox look at us as they approach, and then shift to looking straight ahead as they walk by. We go back in.

G. "What did you see?"

Various answers.

G.: "The purpose of this exercise is to prepare something we'll do next week. What I saw: a battered woman, a kid who was hungry, people who were aimless... It depends how we look ... A prophet is not a literal watcher. My point of view is that I look at potential church members for looking for spiritual purposes. ... sometimes we look at people like a commodity ... to fill the church.... looking and not seeing like the watch men on the Titanic, the people before 9/11, or the people checking the levees in New Orleans ... the need for reminders ...

708

709

710

G: "Who needs to lose weight?" Two people, including Becky raise their hands

G: "prayer walking ... open air meetings traditional for the Salvation Army ... Brother

711

Christian?"

An elderly gentleman who explain he is from Jamaica starts telling us quite fluently how this is often done in the Caribbeans ... we had special songs.

{he gives the script for the services}

G: "we can do ... it can be fun" "Are the songs we have the right one? They have to be, like the foods, is Starbucks appropriate to this community ... there is one at 125th street, but it's a different Harlem there ... it is the same for the spiritual"

712

{several people somewhat animatedly joined in this Starbucks moment}

G: "I am African American, and of course I liked macaroni and cheese, corn bread but now I ask for a salad. I like to go to the refrigerator in the middle of the night but I have a picture of me when I was 400 pounds pinned on it... this will stop me! ... you have to find what will work for you ... a personal vision.

G: "Brother William! Has God told you to do something.

W: " I know what I am trying to avoid."

G. "Brother Soan?"

S. Responds not very clear but it has something to do with children and youth ministries.

G: "Have you written it down?"

G: "But then life happens ... tell us what happened to you

S. tells a rapid autobiography:

was raised in church

father died

dropped out

was homeless for two months in Las Vegas,

came to New York, was homeless there for months

led by a friend to the Salvation Army

met Glasco

G.: "Amen?" people: "Amen!"

713

7:00 3 women come in

G.: finding your personal vision

G: "Sister Becky ... closing prayer"

She improvises.

As we move out G. Comes to me, “how is the study going” “thank you for coming” “be blessed” I say something about the way he teaches with a particular form of authority. He says “sometimes they resist!”