

BIBLE STUDY AT THE SALEM METHODIST CHURCH

[given the delay, these are little more than transcriptions of my scratch notes]

I had dinner at the South Beach Café at Lenox and 124th. “African,” rather plain, decoration. I had the sense that I was greeted with quizzical looks. The people were pleasant. Reggae music in the background.

I reached Salem at 6:25, again not quite sure of where to go, ended in the church office where two ladies told me to follow them as they were going to the Bible Study. I helped set up the chairs in the BS room.

One woman arrives and asks “when did the classes start?”

6:30: AP arrives in old sweat pants, phone in the ear that he kept there most of the time. He complained about allergies.

“Hymn 334”

“Prayer intentions”

“Let us pray ... for the pope ... Our Father”

{(= Lecture has started =)}
{(= title =)}

“For each person, God has a plan and a purpose.
For each church, God has a plan and a purpose.
We must discern God’s plan for us.”

{(= introduction =)}

{AP gets more animated}

There are now about 6 people (5 women). The 5 women are taking notes.

“Do you know the name of the disciples? Where can you find the list?” People get excited as they propose Mathews? Acts? There too!

6:50 three more women arrive

AP: “did Jesus get instructed?” “He went to the Temple” “Where in scriptures?” “You need to back it up!” “Luke 2 41”

“this is why Bible Study is so important” “Jesus had to do it!” “Why do I feel like I am pulling teeth to get the congregation to do it?!” “It takes time, effort, commitment”

“Do I have beautiful feet?” “It is in the scriptures ... Romans 10 15”

{for some of this he adopts a teasing tone}

7:05 another woman comes in. There are now 10 women and 1 man.

{(= recap =)}

{(= new topic =)}

“Jesus is not longer with them.”

AP queries the audience for something he said earlier. “I know you took it down ... I am just checking {teasing tone} Right! ... You should know these things.” “Why is the Creed known as the ‘Nicene Creed’?”

Some people in the audience appear to fumble when trying to answer. After he gives it, some say, “but we knew this!” {playful resistance?}

AP: “Why am I telling you all this? ... so that you can go out ... glow and grow!”

He repeats the last two words several times as if he is enjoying what is now a more animated series of exchanges. He seems to be enjoying this.

AP: “I am making a song” and he starts singing with ‘glow and grow’

{this seems to be a kind of education for life through analogy: Jesus, the disciples, you}

“Where are you as individuals? Where is Salem? That’s the question! ... Any questions or comments?”

7:31: Silence

{(= a kind of restart =)}

“God has a new vision for Salem... Those he called 20 years ago are gone! ... Are we ready?”

“Amen”

7:40: “Let us pray!”