

LINDA – Fieldnotes – Thursday, January 17, 2008

Subject: Impromptu meeting with John Nelson

Location: Varenne's office

Time: sometime before 3pm until 3:30ish

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I was scheduled to meet with Varenne at 3pm. When I arrived at his office around 3:05, he and John Nelson were standing by the doorway to the inner office, talking.

John invited Varenne to a group he leads (Bible study?) in the Bronx. [It sounded to me that John was repeating this invitation, and that Varenne had already expressed interest in attending.] He told Varenne that he need not be afraid [presumably to go into the Bronx]. He told me I could go as well. [I am not sure if this is a group of pastors.]

Talk covered Bill Clinton, whom John still admires for having his office in Harlem, as well as the Abyssinian Church. John spent some time trying to remember the name of the pastor, Butts, Calvin Butts, as he reassured us that he would be able to introduce us to people. Varenne expressed hope that we would be able to enter churches once cleared by pastors. Some talk about top-down and bottom-up. Once again John expressed his whole-hearted enthusiasm for the project.

Afterwards, Varenne remarked that again, they had had their entire conversation standing up in the doorway.

Varenne also told me that John has a definite idea of what we are doing that does not seem to match what we think we are doing. [This is also my sense with Sandra Overo.]