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JAZZ AND MISSION: REFORMING ECCLESIOLOGY TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE DISENFRANCHISED

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Introduction

Recent events have seen a political and social backlash that expresses the marginalization and frustration felt by the many who feel left behind by the current economic and political order. Loss of income, employment, and status have forced many to face challenges to their sense of identity and purpose. The response to many of these challenges has included dismay, depression, and anger at institutionalized authority. In some ways, these issues are to be expected. According to Anthony Giddens, the structures of modern society have social "disembedding mechanisms" that separate people from their traditional security structures, such as village, kinship, or community.[1] Giddens maintains that further insecurity has been introduced by science and scientism, which have introduced elements of doubt, mutability, and instability into the fabric of knowledge itself,[2] meaning that even knowledge and truth are no longer seen as providing a source of security at a moral or intellectual level. Combined with the decline of traditional relational structures such as extended families, the forces of modernity, industrialism, and capitalism threaten people's ontological security, that sense of trust that "everything will be

1. Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, 2.
2. Ibid.

OK." This sense of detachment from the world around us prompts a turn to reflexivity and self-examination, where other matters, some as simple as lifestyle choices, take on more importance for constructing an individual's sense of meaning and security than they had previously.[3]

There is a growing realization that recent economic changes have not helped matters, as the decline of fair-wage but low-skilled jobs has led to a corresponding decline in markers of adulthood, adulthood here taken as a metaphor for personal "wholeness" or "completion."[4] Traditional markers of adulthood such as owning a vehicle, having a spouse, acquisition of a home, and raising children function as rites of passage that indicate one is a fully-matured individual, be they rich or poor.[5] The widespread delay for many people in Western culture in passing these milestones has resulted in what sociologists refer to as "emerging adulthood," or pejoratively, as "extended adolescence." The period of emerging adulthood consists of a person's twenties, a period formerly assigned to the late teenage years, where an individual seeks to discover themselves and establish careers before settling down.[6]

For the working class, and now for many people from other social classes as well, this transition is often delayed indefinitely

3. Ibid., 5.

4. Ibid., 32–47. In Jennifer Silva's words ("Constructing Adulthood," 506), "definitions of adulthood both reflect and operate as cultural models of personhood." That is, these definitions define a person, determining how they function as a member of society and are regarded by members of the community.

5. Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, 46.

6. Smith, et al., *Lost in Transition*, 15–16. According to Smith, this phase in life is often being extended to cover ages eighteen to thirty, whereas in previous generations the signs of being an adult, such as house, family, or steady job were generally achieved by one's early twenties. Silva conducts an in-depth study of strategies for coping with this delay, or perceptions of the impossibility of total transition to "adulthood," in "Constructing Adulthood in an Age of Uncertainty." She operates within the theoretical framework set forth by Giddens. Much of the problem lies in the value statements attributed to the changing lifestyles of the young, but that is an issue beyond the scope of this paper.

due to financial difficulties resulting from changes in the economy. Jennifer Silva argues that the disappearance of achievable rites of passage for younger working-class individuals has been replaced by an internalized narrative motif modeled on the Therapeutic Model of the Self (TMS),[7] a product of both economic changes and the psychologization of Western culture around the reflexive self.[8] Emotional milestones such as self-fulfillment or self-improvement have replaced outward signs of socioeconomic maturity, where individuals overcome obstacles such as drug addiction or emotional recovery from loss, rejection, or abusive parents. These internal and subjective experiences are then used to create a narrative to give a sense of continuity, progress, and ontological security in the absence of outwardly visible progress.[9] The internalization of rites of passage also helps in alleviating frustration or responsibility for an individual's failures.[10]

7. Illouz, *Saving the Modern Soul*; Silva, "Constructing Adulthood," 505–19.

8. Silva, "Constructing Adulthood," 506; Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, 2, 32–34. The reflexive model of the self has implications for other areas of theological and biblical studies. For instance, see Stendahl, "Apostle Paul."

9. Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, 76.

10. Illouz, *Saving the Modern Soul*, 183. According to Illouz, the TMS performs numerous sociological and existential functions: it can (1) explain contradictory emotions; (2) allow the subject to function as both patient and consumer, merging the idea of the self as a passive object with that of the self as active subject; (3) establish coherence and continuity for an individual's story by placing it within a progressive/regressive framework analogous to the Judeo-Christian narrative template; (4) promote self-improvement while exonerating individuals from negative actions by allowing mistakes or flaws in the past; (5) create a narrative of self-change and improvement that provides continuity with the past and something to be optimistic for in the future; (6) be connected to the larger family narrative, alleviating a sense of isolation; (7) tap into the masculine ideal of self-reliance while also accommodating a more "feminine" emphasis upon emotion; and (8) create an identity out of victimhood through appeal to recognition and validation (Illouz, *Saving the Modern Soul*, 183). Illouz is frequently polemical, and not all of the above is necessarily negative in itself. However, it is interesting how many of these elements seem to be a secularized version of Christianity.

Giddens offers the following comment: "Modernity . . . produces *difference, exclusions* and *marginalization.* Holding out the possibility of emancipation, modern institutions at the same time create mechanisms of suppression, rather than actualization, of the self."[11] That is, competition, compartmentalization, and specialization result in marginalization for those who are not successful. While this is usually viewed as an economic issue, it has profound social, emotional, and even spiritual implications. An individual's quest for ontological security has become a much more difficult struggle for social and economic reasons, and seeking personal meaning and finding one's place in life are more challenging than ever. In addition, the thwarting of attempts to actualize the self often prompts an even stronger turn to the self in the quest for actualization.

The local church has the potential to counter disembedding mechanisms by offering a sense of community and belonging to its constituents. However, many churches have adopted a corporate model of ecclesiology out of a desire to attract more members, bringing into the church the very mechanisms responsible for ontological insecurity. We argue that being a member of the body of Christ cannot be analogous to being a consumer. In order to meet the needs of those who are being marginalized by the current economic and political order, the church must not ape this order, but rather provide a counter-narrative that offers the dignity, belonging, and confidence in the truth that ought to be an inherent part of belonging to the body of Christ.

Our contention is that mission is not only a way of reaching out to those who are lost, but is also a neglected feature of how churches care for the spiritual needs of people who are already Christians, particularly those being marginalized by the political and social problems expressed above. This is because mission acts to de-center the self within a community that can provide a sense of meaning and security. Unpacking this requires clarifying what we mean by "mission" and "de-centering the self." We agree with Paul Avis's definition of mission: "*Mission*

11. See Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, 6.

is the whole Church bringing the whole Christ to the whole world."[12] In other words, mission involves the living members of the universal church (which, as members of Christ's body, are included in the whole Christ) in the mission of God to realize the kingdom of God on earth.[13] By de-centering the self, we mean that, because one's identity as a member of the body of Christ is formed in relation to God and his people, the self is no longer obliged to come up with an existential narrative to meet its needs (the TMS). That is, self-fulfillment is no longer the *raison d'être* of the self. And yet, paradoxically, the self may indeed end up being fulfilled in the process of responding to God's calling to join his mission as part of the Body of his Son.

God's calling on the lives of believers to join his mission is for the sake of his people and the growth of the kingdom, yet this mission demands the full expression of one's gifts and abilities. We argue that jazz, as a collective musical form, provides a useful analogy for how such a principle operates: the individual musician must simultaneously step forward to employ their unique skills and ideas, and yield to others for the sake of the realization of the collective project of music.[14] Instead of having

12. Avis, *Shaped by Mission*, 1. Cf. Guder, "Missional Church." Guder argues that "mission is not just a program of the church. It defines the church as God's sent people" (6).

13. Entering into God's mission certainly includes evangelism, but it also includes the wider activities of the church. According to Avis, mission is "the cutting edge of the total life of the Church," including (but not limited to) activities such as teaching, prayer, baptism, communion, pastoral care, and worship. Avis, *Shaped by Mission*, 1.

14. Bridging jazz and theology may initially appear to be novel and esoteric, but the number of publications in this area is on the rise. A number of recent monographs are specifically devoted to the intersection between jazz and theology (Pederson, *God, Creation, and All that Jazz*; Gelinas, *Finding the Groove*; Heltzel, *Resurrection City*; Howison, *God's Mind in That Music*; Crawford, *Theology as Improvisation*), and the number of articles and book chapters inspired by this pairing is also quietly growing (e.g., Reynolds, "Improvising Together"—see note 15). Jeremy Begbie, for instance, devotes two chapters in *Theology, Music and Time* to the intersection between improvisation and freedom. Bruce Ellis Benson writes both musicological work on improvisation (*The Improvisation of Musical Dialogue*), and on the intersection between jazz and theology (e.g., chapters 1 and 3 of *Liturgy as a*

to autonomously forge an individual narrative to give meaning to life, one actively joins in and helps shape the narrative of God's people. In short, local churches can address the contemporary problems of ontological anxiety and narcissism by a return to community through a jazz-shaped perspective on mission.[15]

Methodology

We are opting to use analogy as a way of bringing together the domains of jazz and ecclesiology. In this paper, we hope to create an association or analogy between jazz and ecclesiology in the mind of the reader. Analogy works by discovering parallels between different areas through the observation of similar structural and logical relationships. More specifically, we are constructing an analogical argument from the domain of jazz to the domain of ecclesiology in the hope of reforming the latter.

Paul Bartha defines an analogical argument as an "explicit representation of analogical reasoning that cites accepted similarities between two systems in support of the conclusion that some further similarity exists."[16] We want to demonstrate similarities between the system or the domain of jazz improvisation and the church in order to suggest that the former can enhance our view of the latter, and by doing so, aid the church in offering community to those affected by ontological anxiety and narcissism. Cameron Shelley provides a concise summary of Keith Holyoak and Paul Thagard's multiconstraint theory of

Way of Life). Our work distinguishes itself from these examples by explicitly adopting a coherent methodology. It also combines the strengths of some of the works listed above by engaging with the literature on jazz, jazz improvisation, and jazz's historical and sociological dynamics.

15. Thomas E. Reynolds makes a similar comparison between jazz performance and the Christian community in "Improvising Together." His thesis is that "Christian community is a praxis of interactive 'solidarity' opened outward in 'hospitality' toward the stranger, the different, the other, who is in fact my neighbor and loved by God" (46). While our project overlaps with Reynolds's work in certain respects, our focus is on showing how a jazz-shaped view of the church can help to meet the needs of those affected by ontological insecurity.

16. Bartha, *By Parallel Reasoning*, 1.

analogy, which we are employing to move from the domain of jazz to that of ecclesiology.[17] Shelley begins by dividing "the analogy into two domains, the *source* and *target*. The source domain is that set of concepts that the analogy draws upon as the basis for a conclusion" and "the target domain is that set of concepts about which the analogy is going to make a claim."[18] In this paper, the source domain we are using is jazz (as an idealized cognitive model) and the target domain is the Christian life. Within each of the domains lie the various associative, syntagmatic, and paradigmatic structures that give them their shades of meaning by means of analogues. For instance, the jam session is an analogue in the jazz domain and the church is an analogue in the Christian life domain. The interaction between these analogues can then be "mapped."

According to the multiconstraint theory, there are three types of mapping: attribute mapping, relational mapping, and system mapping. The first "is a mapping between the simple or 'atomic' elements of the analogy."[19] For instance, a jazz musician from the jazz domain can be mapped against the Christian of the Christian life domain. The second, relational mapping, maps the relationships between analogues in each domain. A jazz musician goes to a jam session in order to hone her craft, while a Christian goes to church to strengthen his faith. The relationship between individuals and gatherings is similar. Finally, system mapping describes the "relations of relations in the analogy" and therefore brings "all the relevant information together."[20]

We will now proceed to map some of the relational analogues between jazz and the church (with special reference to Pauline ecclesiology), taking note of their connotative and metaphorical implications for the Christian life. We hope to produce a semantic shift in how we perceive the church and the Christian life, that is, we hope that people will understand them differently. The gospel does not proclaim narcissistic self-

17. See Holyoak and Thagard, *Mental Leaps*, 19–38.
18. Shelly, "Analogy Counterarguments," 226.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.

righteousness, nor does it only urge repentance from the sin of narcissism, although that is important. Most importantly, the gospel grants opportunity for participation and self-realization in a manner similar to jazz music, though paradoxically this occurs through de-centering of the self.

The Domain of Jazz

The word 'jazz' connotes a broad spectrum of images, styles of music, and even an era of American history.[21] We want to focus on a narrow aspect of jazz that demonstrates a way of being and doing that the church can learn from as it seeks to address the hurts and insecurities of the Western world. This aspect is the phenomenon of musical improvisation in the setting of a jam session or jazz combo. Understanding something of the nature of improvisation in these contexts provides a vision of an analogical conception of the church. To be frank, jazz improvisation is often a complicated and messy affair that can often fall short of what it aspires to (much like the church). This caveat aside, we describe jazz improvisation as it ought to work as opposed to the way it works in all cases.

Improvisation is difficult to define with precision.[22] Thankfully, here it is only necessary to grasp a little of what it means in the context of jazz. For the uninitiated, "the evident spontaneity of improvisation encourages the impression that something is being created out of nothing."[23] Yet, like being a disciple of Jesus, playing jazz requires a great deal of study and self-control. The would-be jazz musician must gain some facility with an instrument and a working knowledge of music theory and the jazz tradition before stepping up to the bandstand.[24] They must

21. See Gridley, et al., "Defining Jazz."

22. For a fuller discussion on the nature of improvisation in general, see Peters, *The Philosophy of Improvisation*. For a treatment of musical improvisation in particular, see Benson, *Improvisation of Musical Dialogue*.

23. Alperson, "On Musical Improvisation," 21.

24. Paul Berliner records part of a personal interview with a musician, who, when he was younger, tried to sit in with Miles Davis before learning about harmony: "[He] imagined that if he could only muster the courage to join

be able to enact the melody and harmony of the songs being played, and to do this without having prepared every detail beforehand. They must simultaneously draw from a storehouse of knowledge and be able to respond to the other musicians present to play, making music on a high wire "without a net."[25] Each instrument has a role to play in making the music, and each musician will be called upon to step into the spotlight to say something. Moreover, playing with other musicians requires one to be attuned to them in rhythmic, melodic, harmonic, and emotional ways. In other words, jazz improvisation has both individual and collective elements that seep into each other when music is being performed.

Becoming a jazz musician begins with "call and response": one encounters the music and is drawn to it.[26] In some cases, this is instantaneous, and in others, it takes repeated exposure before one decides to join in the music-making. Ideally, they find a mentor, or even a group of mentors that show and tell them what they need to do and know. Paul Berliner weaves together

a renowned musician on the bandstand, inspiration would strike. Pursuing his family's acquaintanceship with Miles Davis, [he] obtained an invitation to sit in with Davis' band. He laughs ruefully as he recalls losing his place after the first eight bars and how brutally thereafter each pitch of his impassioned performance clashed with the band. When the dismal solo finally aborted, Davis pulled him off the stage and grumbled hoarsely, 'You don't know your chords, do you?'" (Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz*, 71).

25. Wayne Shorter's 2013 album is titled "Without a Net." Ed Sarath contrasts composition, which he defines as "the discontinuous process of creation and iteration (usually through notation) of musical ideas," with musical improvisation, "the spontaneous creation and performance of musical materials in a real-time format, where the reworking of ideas is not possible" (Sarath, "A New Look," 2, 3). Because jazz improvisation takes place "in a real-time format," jazz musicians cannot take back or rework something once they have played it. Any mistakes or clashes between musicians with differing musical ideas cannot be hidden and must be dealt with. According to trumpeter Art Farmer, "If a wrong note comes out, you have to make something out of that note. You can't just let the solo fall apart." Farmer, quoted in Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz*, 211.

26. See Benson ("Call Forwarding," and *Liturgy as a Way of Life*, 19–21, 33–47) for his discussions of the central role of the call and response between God and his creatures in theology.

interviews with several jazz greats describing the communal way that they pursued learning jazz, organically combining individual practice with collaborative efforts to understand and interpret the jazz tradition.[27] They became disciples, obsessed with the goal of making music with others. Not all who hear the call respond to it in a maximal way: some decide that they do not like jazz; others find it tolerable, still others become fans and even critics—these people make up the audience. They too have a role to play in being influenced by, and, to a certain degree, responding to the music. But until they decide to become musicians, they cannot fully understand what happens on the bandstand. Nor can they fully participate in the community that is playing the music.

The process of becoming a jazz musician provides several analogues to the way people are drawn into the church. Experiencing jazz corresponds with experiencing the gospel; the music is analogous to the proclamation, and the visual and aural indications of the relationship between musicians are analogous to the relationships between members of the church. The process of discipleship and the role of teachers and mentors are nearly univocal. The audience corresponds to the world outside the church. Sometimes the audience may provide useful critiques of the church, benefit from what the church provides, and even provide support for some of the activities of the church (e.g., donations); just as jazz critics can make insightful comments on jazz performances, jazz music can be enjoyed, and patrons can support jazz financially. Yet those outside of the church cannot fully experience the fellowship and well-being that it provides.[28]

Understanding the basis on which improvisers interact requires a basic understanding of the role that each instrument fulfills in the context of a jam session or jazz combo. Traditionally, the drums and the bass mark the time, and the bass and the harmonic instrument (usually piano or guitar) mark the

27. See Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz*, 21–35.

28. We are not suggesting, of course, that the hope of jazz musicians is to make everyone a jazz musician; the hope of Christians is that everyone will come to know Christ. At this point the analogy begins to break down.

chord progression, while the horns play the melody. These roles can be swapped and traded in any number of different permutations. For instance, in the Miles Davis composition, *So What*, the bass plays the melody, and in many of Sonny Rollins performances, he begins a piece by himself on tenor saxophone, taking upon himself the responsibility of keeping time, outlining the chord progression and making melodic statements all at once. However, even though this freedom exists, each instrument is still uniquely suited to its role; the range of the bass is better suited for playing the roots of the harmony than the trumpet, just as the trumpet is better suited to clearly playing the melody than the drums. The possibility of switching roles among different instruments highlights the tension between what Paul Rinzler calls "freedom and responsibility."[29]

In addition to the roles they fulfill when they play the melody, each instrument is given an opportunity to solo, causing other instruments to change their accompaniment style to accommodate the instrument that is playing, or even dropping out altogether for the duration of the solo.[30] Such accommodation uses a strategy of inverse proportion to deal with the conflict between assertion and openness.[31] Time provides the possibility of sequence, creating space for each player to assert themselves and for others to listen to them. Freedom of expression passes between the players, who alternate between restricting themselves to free their fellows and taking the lead.

Creating space for the other to speak does not just entail the practice of restraint; it also creates the opportunity to listen. It is precisely in this encounter that one is presented with fresh options for improvisation. An obvious example of this is the practice of "trading fours" among musicians at a jam session,

29. See Rinzler, *The Contradictions of Jazz*, *passim*.

30. While there is certainly a degree of overlap between switching roles and the practice of soloing, we distinguish between them because roles are often in effect for the statement of the melody and the solo section, and only shift to accommodate a member of the rhythm section who is taking a solo. Theologically, we wish to distinguish between the freedom to play different roles and the practice of speaking and listening.

31. See Rinzler, *The Contradictions of Jazz*, 110–15.

usually after the soloists have finished improvising through the form of the piece being played. Players interact with one another in four bar segments—this works best when their statements interact, much like in a good conversation or debate. On a subtler level, a level of interaction is possible between a soloist and a rhythm section who are listening to one another *as they are playing*, providing an opportunity for the exchange of ideas that can serve to lift a solo beyond the original conception of the soloist. Robert Hodson documents the ways in which soloists and accompanists interact with one another to achieve musical goals. For instance, he shows how saxophonist Wayne Shorter and pianist Herbie Hancock collaborate to achieve a "metric superimposition" in relation to the "basic metric structure of the tune" (i.e. playing an idea in 3/4 time over 4/4 time).[32] Seen through the lens of Rinzler's approaches to apparent contradictions in jazz, propagation (the creation of something new) resolves the problem of individualism and inter-connectedness; the soloist asserts her individuality, but in connection with the rest of the ensemble, her expression is enhanced and developed.

On top of the propagation that occurs between a jazz musician and her fellows is what Hal Crook calls the "*It*" factor. In his introduction to the basics of jazz improvisation, Crook suggests that the ego is a barrier that is ultimately detrimental to playing jazz music. The "*It*" factor is what takes over playing the music once the ego is out of the way:

> Now, this may sound a little non-scientific at first, but I would say, quite seriously and for lack of a better term, that *It*—yes, *It*—plays the solo; and that *It* plays the solo *through* us, using our musical resources, i.e., our instrumental technique, musicianship, experience, understanding, etc. And, to the degree that *It* can play through us freely and without our ego's interference, to that degree is *It* the author and creator of the solo; to that degree is *It* responsible for the results of the playing. Therefore, we cannot take the credit—or the blame!—when *It* plays. All we can ever do is take responsibility for

32. Hodson, *Interaction*, 113.

> continually preparing ourselves through practice and experience to become more fit vehicles for *Its* use.[33]

Crook's understanding of how the "*It*" factor operates leaves space for personal accountability in terms of developing musical resources, but leaves actual performance to something outside of the self. If we accept the "*It*" factor as an ideal for jazz musicians, it means that performing jazz de-centers the self by recognizing a source of the performance that lies outside of the self.

Grounding all music, including jazz, are the physical laws of the universe that make music possible. In contrast to contemporary doubts and uncertainties regarding knowledge, musicians enjoy a "covenant with the overtone series," the physical basis for tonal music.[34] Albert Blackwell contrasts Richard Rorty's anti-foundationalism with a musical perspective:

> Think of instrumentalists tuning for a performance of Bach or Schoenberg or Ligeti; think of a chorus of accomplished singers burnishing their intonation; think of parents suffering through a recital of the lower-school strings class; or think of Bach and Schoenberg and Ligeti themselves at their work of composing music: are any of these persons apt to agree with Rorty that the world has no intrinsic nature, that the Pythagorean octave and 5th are contingent ratios, products of time and chance? Are they apt to agree that the overtone series can, in Rorty's phrase, "be made to look good or bad, important or unimportant, useful or useless, by being redescribed"? I do not think so.[35]

33. Crook, *Ready, Aim, Improvise!*, 315. In an interview for a book of transcriptions of his solos, Bob Brookmeyer describes something similar to Crook's "It" factor: "So, if it comes from somewhere, that means we are 'receivers' of music. The music god is out there saying, 'O.K., I think I'll visit Grantham today, and see what Brookmeyer's doing.'" Hudson, *Evolution*, xii. He goes on to say that, in order to be a fit vehicle for the music, musicians "have to keep [their] receivers in good working order," mirroring Crook's comments about being responsible for musical resources but not being the source of the music per se.

34. Blackwell, *Sacred in Music*, 85. See pp. 56–59 for a description of the overtone series.

35. Blackwell, *Sacred in Music*, 81.

Musical experience provides musicians and listeners alike with an encounter with the unavoidable objective underpinnings of an art form that grants its practitioners a fair amount of freedom in performance. It affirms that truth can be articulated from a variety of perspectives without being disconnected from reality.

In summary, a jazz musician is valued both as an individual and as a member of a group; ideally, the group does not inhibit individual expression, but propels the individual beyond themselves, enabling them to achieve things they would not be able to achieve alone. Beyond the community of musicians lies the "*It*" factor—which ideally guides the members, and we would say by extension, the performance as a whole—and the physical laws that make music possible. To be played by the music, so to speak, involves letting go of the ego for the sake of something else.

Moving from the domain of jazz into the domain of ecclesiology, there is a similarity between the way the self of a jazz musician is de-centered by interacting with others and submitting to the "*It*" factor, and the way Christians derive ontological security from sources beyond themselves. The autonomous self is simply too small and weak to realize its own needs based on its own resources.[36] Being an autonomous individual is a limited state of being. Just as different instruments fulfill different roles in a jazz combo, so Christians with different abilities fulfill different roles in the church. And just as the active and able participation of each instrument is integral to the success of the combo, so the active and able participation of each member is integral to the success of the local church. As musicians through performance acknowledge the overtone series in their music, so Christians draw from their individual and collective experience of God's actions in their lives.[37] And just as a jazz musician relies upon the "*It*" factor for their share of the

36. Some might object here that the solo work of certain artists provides a counter analogy to the one we are constructing. However, even in these cases such an artist has already been formed by tradition, mentors, and colleagues.

37. Though more could be said, a full-fledged Christian epistemology is beyond the scope of this paper.

performance as well as their fellow musicians for support and interaction, a Christian must rely on God as provider of material and spiritual security and on their fellow Christians for material and social needs that mitigate ontological anxiety. Their impact on the world and their communities is both derived from the statements they make individually as a participant in God's mission and from the statements they make as a part of the mission group—the church. When the church joins together to participate in God's mission, it proclaims the Gospel; it plays the music that stirs a desire in receptive audience members to join in.

The Domain of Pauline Ecclesiology

Our jazz analogy, we argue, is not merely an interesting model for how the local church might operate. It is a model drawn from contemporary culture that has closer analogical ties with the church described in the New Testament than other models for the church that currently hold sway in the Western world. For instance, the corporate model for church operation, where its leadership functions as human resources agents, seems to be supported by 1 Cor 12. After all, 1 Cor 12:7–10 states nine times how each is granted a gift for the common good.[38] Yet individual Christians do not exercise these God-given gifts or talents of their own accord. Rather, they are demonstrations by the Holy Spirit of the mysterious unity of the church, as Paul reiterates eight times in 1 Cor 12:4–9.[39] The talents or vocations of individuals are not simply assets to be plugged in where

38. It is stated once in 12:7, twice in 12:8, twice in 12:9, five times in 12:10.

39. For example, τὸ δὲ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα (but the same Spirit; 12:4); καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς κύριος (but the same Lord; 12:5); ὁ δὲ αὐτὸς θεὸς ὁ ἐνεργῶν τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν (but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone; 12:6); ἑκάστῳ δὲ δίδοται ἡ φανέρωσις τοῦ πνεύματος πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον (to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good; 12:7); ᾧ μὲν γὰρ διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος δίδοται . . . ἄλλῳ δὲ . . . κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα (For truly to one is given through the Spirit . . . and to another . . . according to the same Spirit; 12:8); ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι . . . ἐν τῷ ἑνὶ πνεύματι (by the same Spirit . . . by the one Spirit; 12:9).

appropriate; rather, it is God who is working in his churches, much like the "*It*" factor is at work in an ideal jazz performance. Indeed, it is questionable whether 1 Cor 12 is really about "spiritual gifts" in the sense they are commonly understood.[40] Hughson Ong argues that the term should instead be used not to catalogue abilities, but to describe "spiritual matters," "spiritual practices," or "things that pertain to the spirit," the implication being that the "spiritual gift" concept is overemphasized in church life.[41] Outwardly, it may seem that it is the leadership who determines whether a person is fit to be an apostle or prophet. Yet Paul does not interpret the process in this way. Paul would claim that things are happening because God is at work, rather than saying that God is at work because people are exercising their abilities.[42]

At times, the construct of so-called spiritual gifts can actually interfere with participation due to an emphasis on selecting the right people for the right job. However, Ong concludes that "the notion of 'spiritual gifts' is entirely a theological concept that has been haphazardly introduced to the meaning of [the Greek lexemes often translated as "spiritual gifts" in Rom 1:11; 1 Cor 1:7; 12:1; and 14:1, 12], even when these lexemes do not actually share any common semantic features as well as carry such a concept."[43] That is, "spiritual gifts" are a human construct not necessarily found in Scripture, and the way churches

40. Paul introduces the discussion with περὶ δὲ τῶν πνευματικῶν, or literally "now concerning the spirituals" (or, "spiritual *things*"). In the following discussion the "spiritual gifts" are simply χαρίσματα, or "gifts."

41. Ong, "Spiritual Gifts."

42. Καὶ οὓς μὲν ἔθετο ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ (and indeed God has appointed in the church; 1 Cor 12:28; cf. 1 Thess 5:19). Other weaknesses in the corporate model of church include the way those who attend church become consumers rather than disciples, and how the head pastor functions as a CEO in relation to the congregants, contrary to the model Jesus establishes in Matt 20:25–28 and Mark 10:42–45. See Maddox, "'In the Goofy Parking Lot,'" for a catalogue of evidence that leads her to conclude, "Growth churches are capitalism's cathedrals" (155).

43. Ong, "'Spiritual Gifts'," 590. A longer and more detailed study of this topic can be found in Ong, "Reconsidering the Meaning and Translation of Πνενευματικός and Πνεῦμα."

sometimes approach spiritual gifts is akin to the economic and social forces in society that result in the marginalization of people. Spiritual gifts may not be the best paradigm for approaching ecclesiology or missiology.

Instead, Paul emphasizes inclusion over empowerment, and enfranchisement and participation over gifting. Paul states that the ministry of reconciliation results in all believers being what the CEB translates as "fellow citizens with God's people" (συμπολῖται τῶν ἁγίων; Eph 2:19) who "belong to God's household" (οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ). The importance of citizenship can be easily lost on those from countries where right of birth grants citizenship. In the Greco-Roman culture of Paul's day, citizenship was restricted to a select few who were usually from well-off backgrounds. Nearly everyone else was a slave, faced the stigma of being a former slave, or at the least was from a non-citizen people group. The lower levels of society not only lacked civil rights associated with citizenship, but also experienced Roman domination more acutely in the form of relatively higher levels of taxation that were often compounded by debt burdens acquired in the payment of these taxes.[44] Elevating every member of the church to the status of full citizen (within the church) was a move of radical affirmation of the equality of all people. Further, placing each individual person under the protection of the Fatherhood of God, the supreme *Paterfamilias*, in effect granted each believer an unprecedented level of dignity not ascribed to them by peers.

In Eph 2:21–22 this group of people attributed such grand dignity "grows into a holy temple in the Lord" (αὔξει εἰς ναὸν ἅγιον ἐν κυρίῳ) that is "built together [by the Spirit] into a dwelling place for God" (συνοικοδομεῖσθε εἰς κατοικητήριον τοῦ

44. Tax collectors were not subject to direct government control, making the system ripe for corruption (Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 264). The Gnomon Idios Logos tax-code of Roman Egypt even regulated the tax status of offspring from mixed unions, ensuring that such offspring would be subject to taxation rather than receive the exemption from taxes granted the more enfranchised classes (Niehoff, *Philo on Jewish Identity and Culture*, 17–22). For discussion of the implications of Roman taxation for peasants, see Oakman, *Jesus and the Economic Questions of His Day*, 37–93.

θεοῦ ἐν πνεύματι). Individuals are full-fledged members of communities that worship. In 2 Cor 6:16, Paul reiterates this command in the context of the need for personal holiness. Christ can have no association with Beliar (Satan), so it is necessary for Christians to maintain personal holiness because "*we* are the temple of the living God" (ἡμεῖς γὰρ ναὸς θεοῦ ἐσμεν ζῶντος). No one is an island, nor is any single person Christ's temple.

This assumption of full and equal membership serves as warrant for what Paul says in 1 Cor 14:26. Paul's emphasis upon each individual participating is easier to see in the Greek with the repetitive use of ἔχει (third singular of ἔχω, "has") following ἕκαστος (each one). He writes, "What should be done then, my friends? When you come together, *each one* (ἕκαστος) has a hymn (ψαλμὸν *ἔχει*), a lesson (διδαχὴν *ἔχει*), a revelation (ἀποκάλυψιν *ἔχει*), a tongue (γλῶσσαν *ἔχει*), or an interpretation (ἑρμηνείαν *ἔχει*). Let all things be done for building up." Grammatically, it is unclear if Paul means that each person should contribute one item each from the above list, or if members should just contribute one or more of the above as they are able. The point remains that each person contributes to the worship of the community, and that Paul is envisioning full participation, equality, and mutuality because all Christians are full citizens and therefore full participants in the collective worship and presence of God among humans.[45]

The differences citizenship made for an individual were far more tangible in the New Testament period than it usually is today for people in democratic immigrant cultures, as also is the importance of belonging to the family of a socially prominent individual. Paul's use of this imagery is intended to give believers a sense of significance imputed from Christ through the

45. Westfall reconciles Pauline passages that espouse radical equality among Christians such as Gal 3:28 with Pauline passages that seem to espouse gender hierarchy by arguing that the latter are examples of theological contextualism intended to facilitate proselytism. That is, Paul saw the work of Christ as enacting equality to the extent they would subvert social and political structures, making Christianity a threat to the Roman society and political order. Paul therefore accommodates the faith to the culture to avoid eliciting harmful scrutiny. See Westfall, *Paul and Gender*, 11–13, 308.

Spirit in the church community. Paul's emphasis on the enfranchisement and participation of all members suggests people are to be active, rather than passive, members of the community. This in turn suggests a responsibility to the body as well as a sense of belonging and being needed by others. There is a de-centering of the self for a common purpose and for other people. In Paul's mind, everyone should bring something to what we call a worship service or meeting, and everyone should actively participate in the meeting itself—much like a jazz band.

Paul's emphasis is on a meaningful and significant connection to a community that allows active participation. Many traditional social structures face difficulty in adapting to the atomizing and individualizing tendencies of modernity. However, as something with a locus of identity grounded beyond human society in God himself, and attributed to Christians through no merit of their own, the church is portable across social changes in a way that many other social structures are not.

System Mapping the Analogy

By mapping the source domain of jazz with the target domain of Pauline ecclesiology, we can demonstrate the aptness of our analogy, paving the way for further inferences from the domain of jazz to the contemporary domain of the church. Crook's "*It*" factor provides an analogue for the initiative of God in the missional activity of the church. Yet God's initiative requires an active response: just as a jazz musician must undergo rigorous training to be open to the "*It*" factor, so Christians are called to be disciplined (1 Cor 9:24–27). Individual responsibility does not conflict with God's initiative. Rather, both are paradoxically preserved; as Paul writes to the Corinthians, "I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me" (1 Cor 15:10 NRSV). Moreover, just as active participation is required on the bandstand, so it is required in the church: everyone ought to contribute as a full-fledged member of the body of Christ. Rather than being rigidly slotted into carefully defined positions, jazz musicians can swap roles and move to accommodate one another, while acknowledging

individual strengths and weaknesses; we suggest that, following Paul's concerns, the contemporary church ought to be less concerned with categorizing "spiritual gifts" and more concerned with enfranchisement and inclusion. Finally, the way musicians collectively help one another to transcend the limitations of self is analogous to the way members of the church ought to submit to one another in love (Gal 5:21).

Application

The contemporary local church connotes (consciously or otherwise) imagery ranging from a business to a social club. Unlike either of these models, which dichotomize and privatize church life from the rest of life, we suggest that the church, like jazz, must be a way of life. In the closing chapter of his magisterial study, *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation*, Berliner muses on the various ways jazz is a way of life, highlighting the need for both individual study and spontaneous interaction with other musicians.[46] The successful jazz musician must be immersed in his or her craft, looking for inspiration in tradition and daily life and putting it into practice when playing with fellow musicians. Participation in the mission of the church, if it is to meet the needs of post-industrial society, must be something more than an industrial-modernist service provider or a source of therapy for one's private spiritual life.[47] Each member of the church ought to have a sense of making a meaningful contribution to the community, thereby helping to proclaim the gospel to the audience of the world. Active participation negates marginalization; contribution provides dignity and worth. When it entails mutual submission, participation also de-centers the self; one's personal narrative is taken up and woven into the greater music of God's redemption of creation. One's identity becomes intertwined with the people of God and with God himself. As Jesus said, "Those who find

46. Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz*, 486.
47. See Beach and Studebaker, "Emerging Churches."

their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it" (Matt 10:39 NRSV).

Changing the connotations of church will, we hope, result in changes to how church is done, altering its performance practice. Active participation by all, a setting in which each voice is heard, is incompatible with passive consumption. Neither is this paradigm compatible with marginalization. Active participation will at times result in awkwardness, embarrassment, misunderstandings, and disappointment. But it will also encourage honesty, transparency, and mutual trust between God's people. Live jazz music is like that; it is not polished, fixed, and artificially corrected in the studio. Improvising involves taking risks. Post-industrial societies are not in need of another facade papering over various flaws and unmet needs. Nothing short of the participatory unity of the people of God, thereby embodying the unity and diversity of the Triune God, can hope to meet Jesus' desire that the world may know both who sent him and the love of the Father for his people (John 17:20–23). The audience of the contemporary world may be stunned by communities of the people of God living out a jazz-shaped mission.

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