Pentecost, Part I
Cultural Insurgency and Gospel Liberation: Reflections on Jazz, Pentecostal Faith, and the Church

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> The world would be a better place if there was less talk and more scatting… You want to end rudeness, greed, bigotry and war? Then get scatting. It's just secular Pentecostalism, after all – the spirit shining out through strange and unpredictable "tongues." A wordless revolution just waiting to happen.
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> -- Jonathan Holt [1]

Azusa Street today is a garbage-strewn lane tucked away in Little Tokyo in downtown Los Angeles, about 5 miles from my home in East L.A. The teeming tourists and transients are ignorant about its historical significance in the history of multiculturalism. There is no indication that this back alley was once the place where the first African American Methodist Episcopal Church was located, founded by Biddie Mason, who was the first black slave to win her freedom in California courts. Or that later on, Azusa Street was an immigrant neighborhood, first Jewish, then Japanese, and now home to the Japanese American Cultural Center. But the real story of Azusa Street is that it was the epicenter of one of the most radical moments in the history of the North American Christianity.

I. Pentecostalism and Jazz at the Turn into the 20th Century

In 1906, Duke Ellington began studying piano at age seven, with a piano teacher appropriately named Mrs. Clinkscales. Clarinetist and Ellington band member

[1] Found at: www.woobiquity.com/ubiquity/page/32/.

Barney Bigard was born in New Orleans, Lousiania in March; Bigard and Sidney Bechet would eventually introduce the Duke to true Jazz. Other Jazz musicians born in 1906 include Frankie Newton, Wild Bill Davison, Pee Wee Russell, Bud Freeman, J C Higginbotham, Valaida Snow, Cozy Cand Muggsy Spanier. But something else significant to America, and to Jazz, was being born that year as well.

On April 18th, 1906 residents of San Francisco awoke to the great earthquake that devastated that city. In Los Angeles, however, the *Daily Times* published a front-page report that read:

> Weird Babel of Tongues:
> New Sect of Fanatics is Breaking Looses;
> Wild Scene Last Night on Azusa Street

The story went on: "They never dismiss church… An old colored exhort, blind in one eye, is the major-domo of the company… The old man yells his defiance and challenges an answer…"

Another local news report reflected disgust at the "disgraceful intermingling of the races, they cry and make howling noises all day and into the night. They run, jump, shake all over, shout to the top of their voice, spin in circles… They claim to be filled with the spirit. They have a one-eyed, illiterate Negro as their preacher… and colored mammys evangelize on street corners and trolley cars…"

This media maligning, as racist as the times were, was unwittingly witnessing the inauguration of modern Pentecostalism.[2] The preacher they were derogating was William Joseph Seymour, born in 1870 to former slaves in Louisiana. Raised as a Baptist, Seymour was given to dreams and visions as a youth. At age 25, he moved to Indianapolis, where he worked as a railroad porter and waited tables, and then contracted smallpox and went blind in his left eye. In 1900 Seymour became steeped in radical Holiness theology in Cincinnati, then moved to Houston where he joined a small Holiness church pastored by a black woman who was the governess for an increasingly prominent Kansas Holiness evangelist, Charles Fox Parham.

Seymour went to Parham's Bible school to train. Texas law forbade blacks to sit in classrooms with whites, and although Parham himself believed in the separation of the races and the superiority of Anglo Saxons (he was reputed to be a member of the Klan), he allowed Seymour to sit in a hallway and listen to the lectures through the doorway. In early 1906, Seymour was invited to help pastor a Holiness church in Los Angeles. Seymour ministered from a house, often preaching on the front porch to crowds gathered in the street where, once the jostling crowd grew so large the porch floor caved in.

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[2] For fuller accounts of this history see Vinson Synan, "The Origins of the Pentecostal Movement," (2002; www.oru.edu/university/library/holyspirit/pentorg1.html); James Choung, "Let the Walls Fall Down: William Seymour" (1997; http://regions.ivcf.org/multieth/1934); Gary McGee, "William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival" (1999; www.ag.org/enrichmentjournal/199904/026_azusa.cfm); and Larry Martin, The Life and Ministry of William J. Seymour: A History of the Azusa Street Revival (Christian Life Books, 1999).

It was at that point that Seymour moved to an old abandoned African Methodist Episcopal church on Azusa Street, an "undesirable" part of town populated by immigrants, prostitutes and the poor. The building, which had recently been used as a warehouse and stable, was a shambles, but Seymour and his small band of black washerwomen, maids, and laborers cleaned the building, set up board plank seats, and made a pulpit out of old shoebox shipping crates.

Over the next three years as many as 600 persons jammed inside the tiny building, while hundreds more looked in through the windows. Speaking in tongues peppered more traditional black worship styles such as shouting, trances, and the holy dance. There was no order of service, since "the Holy Ghost was in control." No offerings were taken, although a box hung on the wall proclaimed, "Settle with the Lord." It was a noisy place, and services lasted into the night–and it earned the scorn of local polite society and its press. But others in the church took more positive notice. "Pentecost has come to Los Angeles, the American Jerusalem," a rescue mission worker wrote to colleagues back east.

The Azusa Street movement, led by uneducated blacks and whites, spread rapidly around the country: to North Carolina, from where it influenced southern Holiness churches, and to Chicago, where later the Assemblies of God were born. After attending an Azusa Street Revival in 1907, Charles Harrison Mason, a black preacher from Memphis, Tennessee, led his Holiness group into Pentecostalism. Bishop Mason became the founder of the largest black Pentecostal denomination, the Church of God in Christ.

To William Seymour, the message of Jesus was about racial and gender equality. At Azusa blacks and whites and men and women were in leadership under Seymour's direction, unprecedented in the days of Jim Crow. "No instrument that God can use," he wrote, "is rejected on account of color or dress or lack of education." Walter Hollenweger writes:

> White Pentecostals received their ordination from the hands of black Pentecostal bishops; a white eye-witness, Frank Bartleman, related that in the Los Angeles revival, 'the color line was washed away in the blood.' Anglican clergyman Alexander A. Boddy believed the revival was extraordinary precisely because 'white pastors from the South were eagerly prepared to go to Los Angeles to be with the Negroes, to have fellowship with them, and to receive the blessings of the Spirit through their prayers and intercessions. And it was still more wonderful that these white pastors went back to the South and reported to the members of their congregations that they had prayed in one Spirit and received the same blessings'. [3]

But not all white Pentecostals were so disposed. Seymour's dream was shattered when his mentor Charles Parham visited Azusa Street in October of 1906. Parham

[3] Walter J. Hollenweger, "Pentecostalism and Black Power." Theology Today (30:3), October 1973.

was appalled at what he called "darky camp meeting stunts" and the "fits and spasms of spiritualists," and denounced the meetings. Two years later, two white female co-workers absconded to Portland with the mailing list of 50,000 for Seymour's free *Apostolic Faith* magazine, effectively ending his leadership of the emerging movement. And two years after that, a white colleague split the Azusa Street church, separating it off as a white church that focused on speaking in tongues as the exclusive sign of the Holy Spirit—thus beginning the long history of white Pentecostalism that ignored its founder's social practices and message. Seymour remained pastor of a small, interracial congregation until his death in 1922 of a heart attack, or what his followers called a broken heart.

I believe that the story of Azusa St. is related to the story of jazz. After all, they have common roots, both movements born in America in the first decades of the 20th century. This was a crucial historical moment, in which the forces of both technological industrialism and global empire were ascendant, and in their wake came huge transformations in American life and culture. Is it possible that Pentecostalism and Jazz were different expressions of a common resistance to the overly rationalized and regimented imperatives of imperial modernity?

Both Pentecostalism and jazz were also midwifed out of the experience of African American marginality. On one hand one can see in each the ecstatic spirituality of call and response and "raising a song" in the Black church, where the formalized distance between clerical performer and lay spectator that characterized white churches tended to blur and disappear. On the other hand, one can hear the hollers and shouting and moaning that expressed the pain and blues of those laboring in southern fields and northern factories.

Both movements could be interpreted, therefore, as improvisational cultural responses to empire and oppression, uprisings of a more democratic spirit. Jazz has been defined as "a form of communal expression founded on the primacy of the individual voice"; the same could be said of Pentecostal religion. As such, these movements stood in stark contrast to the way in which cultural *differences* were engineered into social *divisions* of Jim Crow America, where the industrial order was predicated upon a social architecture of race and class discrimination and inequality.

Theologically, we could say that God's Holy Spirit is forever seeking to overcome oppression and domination in society, working through persons and social movements to bear witness to the possibilities of freedom and dignity. The primary vehicle for this witness is *supposed* to be the animation of an alternative "social gathering" called *ecclesia*. This is what the Spirit raised up in the brief season of the Azusa Street revival, and this is what she did 2000 years ago at a different moment of empire and oppression, in a movement called "the Way."

II. Pentecost and Insurgent Multiculturalism

On the feast of Pentecost, Christians re-narrate the "birth" of the church in the power of the Holy Spirit. Yet what *sort* of practice the Spirit empowered at Pentecost, and continues to empower, has been a divisive issue in the life of the church ever since. Today ecclesial debates about what it means to be "Spirit-filled" usually focus on individual charismatic gifts, rather on the church as an alternative social model. I would like to suggest, however, that the Pentecost moment of Acts 2 is portrayed by Luke as a public insurrection of multicultural re-constitution. This radical resurgence of the old ways of tribal diversity and equality was intended to illustrate how centrifugal faith can challenge imperial centripetality, right at the heart of cosmopolitan Jerusalem and in the face of Roman social control.

Luke's story of the Spirit's descent on the disciples consists of three parts:

- Acts 2:1-13 the experience of "tongues"
- Acts 2:14-41 Peter's speech and the response of the crowd
- Acts 2:42-47 the discipleship community of goods

The narrative opens with "tongues of fire *distributed* among the disciples" (Acts 2:3), and concludes with church members selling their possessions and "*distributing* them to whoever had need" (2:45). This is the only two appearances of the Greek verb *diamerizō* in Acts. Here I will look at the first re-distribution in terms of cultural power; in a separate article I will look at the second re-distribution in terms of economic power. [4] I want to suggest that Luke's Pentecost has far more to do with the Jubilee vision of redistributive justice than with the ecstatic spectacle of *glossolalia*. This is what the poor black man William Seymour understood and practiced, and what Charles Parham and his Victorian white colleagues quickly tried to suppress before things got "out of hand."

The setting of Luke's Pentecost story is also significant. The "house" in which the disciples are gathered (Acts 2:2) is presumably the same place as the "upper room" of 1:13. As co-conspirators with someone who had just been executed as a political dissident, Jesus' disciples were hiding from the authorities. Whatever else the "great wind" of the Spirit did, it transformed fearful fugitives into "bold" public witnesses (2:29). What begins in a safe-house attic ends in the streets of Jerusalem, as the Galileans return to the very place where their leader was tried and condemned just weeks before. Would *we* have dared go?

In other words, the church is birthed in a remarkable act of "coming out of the closet" (as gays and lesbians would say), and of speaking truth to power (as nonviolent resisters would say). Think today of the Mothers of the Disappeared refusing to cower before a regime of terror in Latin America, or of the Women in Black holding vigil despite a public atmosphere of hostility in Israel/Palestine. *This* is the Spirit that in our own time animated

[4] See "Pentecost, Part II: The Church in the Power of the Spirit? Reflections on Socio-economic Redistribution (and "Half-heartedness") in Acts 2-5 as Warning Tales," 2005.

- Dorothy Day and Catholic Workers to stand in the middle of New York City streets defying air raid drills in the darkest days of the Cold War;
- Martin Luther King and the Movement to pray in the teeth of dogs;
- Cesar Chavez and the UFW to chant "Si se puede!" in the fields of wrath;
- the Berrigan brothers to burn draft files at the height of the Vietnam war;
- Christian Peacemaker teams to stand under U.S. bombs in Baghdad in 2003;
- the women of Las Abejas to nonviolently resist the Mexican army in Chiapas;
- and Nelson Mandela to walk out Riker's Island smiling.

This is how the church was born, and every time we muster the courage to bear the same kind of witness in the Power of the Spirit, the church is born *again*!

Down come mysterious "tongues as of fire" (Acts 2:2). These no doubt correlate to John the Baptist's allusion to baptism "with the Holy Spirit and with fire" promised back in Luke 3:16 (see Acts 1:5). But the tongues are immediately put to *practical* use. What happens next is Luke's midrash on the Babel story of Genesis 11—the archetypal biblical indictment of empire. We are told that "devout Jews from every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5) begin to hear about the "powerful works of God" *in their own tongue* (2:11). Indeed, there is no indication that the "tongues" in this context are anything other than the vehicle of cross-cultural communication. Of course, there was already a perfectly good *lingua franca* available*:* Greek was the official language of the eastern Roman empire. But the Spirit reaches through this veil of cultural regulation, unearthing all the small, local languages, affirming the people in their ethnicity, their tribal identity, their rootedness apart from imperial assimilation.

The crowd's bewilderment is as much about *who* is talking as it is about what they are saying. These are cosmopolitan visitors of high standing, yet they are unaccountably being instructed by rural, uneducated, but suddenly polyglot Galileans (2:7). Later, in one of the many trial scenes in Acts, Luke comments that when the Judean authorities "realized that Peter and John were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished, and took note that these men had been with Jesus" (4:13). Just like William Seymour.

Luke has also made it clear from the upper room scene in chapter one that women are part of this discipleship group, and the suddenly articulate Peter will confirm that women are indeed publicly participating in this prophetic revival (2:17f). Boundaries of race, class and gender are being transgressed by a church empowered by the Spirit. This is not an instance of polite, organizational rhetoric about multiculturalism, much less corporate-sponsored "diversity training" from above. It is an inconvenient, in-your-face people's insurgency declaring liberation from *below*. Just like jazz.

Peter's defense of this cultural mutiny begins with my favorite line in the whole drama: "These men are not drunk, as you suppose; it's only nine in the morning!" (2:15). (Implying, perhaps, that if it were happy hour…) He then goes on to cite the very sober prophet Joel (Jl 2:28-32a), whose phrase "pouring out the Spirit" is

notable because in most prophetic writings this verb (Heb *shaphak*) is used in relation to God's *wrath* (e.g., Is 42:5; Jer 6:11; Lam 4:11; Ez 7:8; Hos 5:10; Zeph 3:8), not *blessing*. It is another indication of the Jubilary abundance raining down on the streets of downtown Jerusalem.

Still, there is plenty of judgment imagery in Peter's street preaching. Indeed, the rest of his speech (Acts 2:22-35) takes aim at the very authorities who have just put Jesus of Nazareth in the electric chair. "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both *Lord* and *Messiah*, this Jesus who you crucified," shouts Peter in 2:36. He could not have been more politically volatile—his people were, after all, firmly under the boot of Caesar's "lordship," and all "messianic" movements were suspect in the eyes of both the Roman and Judean authorities. Peter is, in other words, challenging his compatriots to transfer their allegiance from executioner to victim (2:38). This kind of talk will shortly land him in jail (Acts 4), just as it did John the Baptist (Lk 3:8ff) and of course Jesus himself. Peter has taken up the baton from his fallen comrades, and the Movement goes on. As Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero put it shortly before being murdered by the U.S.-funded military as he celebrated Mass: "I will rise in my people."

Unlike so much of our contemporary social criticism and protest, however, behind Peter's scathing indictment of the public order is the embodied social alternative of a Spirit-filled church (Acts 2:42-47). By the end of this episode, the cringing little group of political refugees of Acts 1 has been transformed into a dynamic community in which the old vision of Sabbath economics is being rehabilitated. Bread is being broken, the scriptures are being studied, possessions are being transformed back into gifts that circulate around "to whomever had need," and, we are told, it is a nonstop celebration. The doors are open, and folk are being drawn in from the actions in the streets. And while that may sound like good news to us, I rather imagine that the reports filed in the "*Jerusalem Post*" of old were every bit as skeptical and pejorative as the *LA Daily Times* was about the Azusa Street revival.

"What does this mean?" ask the onlookers (Acts 2:12). Indeed! It has often been pointed out that the "sign of tongues" foreshadows the pan-Mediterranean missionary reach of the gospel in Acts. What is usually overlooked, however, is the plain meaning of this story: in this multilingual outbreak Luke is affirming the diverse cultural contexts in which the new Christian movement will take flesh. The echoes of the ancient tale of the Tower of Babel are clear: "And at this sound the multitude came together and were confused because each one heard the apostles speaking in their own language" (Acts 2:6). [5] But this is not, as it is usually preached, a *reversal* of the alleged "curse" of Babel; Luke's Pentecost story is a *re-iteration* of that tale's polemic against imperial centripetality. Here again the divine strategy is to deconstruct imperial homogeneity through the rehabilitation of cultural diversity (Gen 11:8f).

[5] The word here for "confusion" (Gk *sungcheō)* is the same root word used in the Septuagint text of Gen 11:7,9.

The point of the gift of tongues is to communicate the gospel across linguistic differences, but *not* to eradicate those differences. That is the difference between true gospel mission and the cross-and-sword kind of Christianity at the service of colonialism that has characterized our history all too often. Unity through the Spirit does *not* mean monoculture — that is the nightmare of imperialism — but rather the celebration of human diversity.

What a woman, this Holy Spirit! Her presence transforms human life inwardly and outwardly, privately and publicly. She emboldens a regular working stiff like Peter, who has known shame and disgrace, to speak the hard truth to his own people in order to bring about change (2:38ff). She empowers the whole gathered church to dance across established (and we should add, legally enforced) boundaries of gender, race, and class, building a bridge on her own back across human differences that have become social divisions. And she animates a Movement that embraces "every tribe and language and people and nation" (Rev 5:9).

Whenever God's Spirit is poured out on people, our traditions and institutions will be disrupted and disturbed. For in the great narrative of the Bible, God's intervention is *always* subversive. Yahweh is no domesticated deity, conveniently baptizing our way of life. Yahweh is the One who seeks to liberate us from our enslaved condition, to heal us of our wounds and addictions, and to animate us in the practice the justice and compassion.

The Acts narrative of Pentecost is a challenge to the entire order of things, personal and political. The Spirit has busted out and busted up business-as-usual many times between Jerusalem and Azusa Street, and she is just waiting to do the same in our own time. If *our* tongues would but dare to loosen.

III. "Why scatting is like speaking in tongues..."

There are a few theologians who have written about the relationship between jazz and Pentecostalism. Harvey Cox's study of Pentecostalism, Fire From Heaven, names its characteristic components as "Primal Speech, Primal Piety and Primal Hope." Cox offers a chapter looking at music in the Pentecostal movement, in which he notes that what Jazz was to music, Pentecostalism was to religion, allowing free expression and spiritual innovation. He concurs with most of the main points I have made above, noting that:

- in the 20th century, Pentecostal spirituality was religion's answer to an increasingly flat modern world which tilted toward "left-brain" rationalism;
- Pentecostalism and jazz are 'siblings' because they were both "born" at the turn of the century from the more repressed aspects of the society;
- both arose as expressions of protest among the Afro-American people, and each was despised and ridiculed at first; and
- just as there is a 'near abolition' in jazz of the distinction between composer and performer, in Pentecostal worship the basic chords are

> "delivered with what might be called 'riffs', with a free play of Spirit-led embellishment and enactment." [6]

No wonder then that contemporary tenor-man Charles Gayle (*Repent*, *Consecration*, *Delivered*, and *Ancient of Days*) can describe the *altissimo* register of his sax in terms of the screams and cries that "come straight out of the church, of the sanctified ecstasy of Pentecostalism." [7]

In "Pentecostalism and Black Power," Walter Hollenweger agrees that "the Pentecostal movement began in the same milieu in which the spiritual, jazz, and blues emerged." He cites James Cone's reminder, however, that black music is not apolitical or otherworldly:

> The divine liberation of the oppressed from slavery is the central theological concept in the black spirituals. These songs show that black slaves did not believe that human servitude was reconcilable with their African past and their knowledge of the Christian gospel. [8]

We must thus never let the public and political aspects of either jazz or spirited faith disappear beneath the tide of private or communal ecstasy, as has happened all too often in American culture.

Finally, S.J. Casmier and D.H. Matthews, in article entitled "Why scatting is like speaking in tongues: Post-modern Reflections on Jazz, Pentecostalism and 'Africomysticism'," posit that jazz and Pentecostalism both reflect an "African aesthetic which emphasizes the creative, spontaneous, abstract and mystical dimensions of human consciousness." [9] Or to put it all so much more simply, as Satchmo did: "What we play is *life*."

It was the socially subversive, even threatening, edge of radical freedom in both jazz and Pentecostalism that initially upset most white folk, even as it was irresistible to a few. So a handful of marginalized Euro-Americans were attracted to William Seymour's Azusa St. revival, just as a handful of white musicians were drawn to jazz in the early days. But it didn't take long for the white establishment to intervene, attempting to domesticate the ecstasy, sever it from its roots in black spirit and struggle and social location, or suppressing it altogether. So the Pentecostal movement became, within a decade, as segregated as the early jazz clubs. To be honest, we must admit that since American apartheid was officially de-certified, continuing functional segregation has been far more persistent in our churches than in jazz culture.

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[6] Harvey Cox. Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century. Reading: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1994, p. 147.

[7] See www.allaboutjazz.com/php/article.php?id=5479 See also Douglas Field**, "**Pentecostalism and All That Jazz: Tracing James Baldwin's Religion." Literature and Theology, July , 2008. http://litthe.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/frn022v1**.**

[8] Cone cited in Hollenweger, *op cit.*

[9] SJ Casmier and DH Matthews, "Why scatting is like speaking in tongues: Post-modern Reflections on Jazz, Pentecostalism and 'Africomysticism'." Literature and Theology (13:2), 1999, pp. 166-176.

Looking at jazz as "secular Pentecostalism" can help remind us of the wider and deeper currents of the Spirit's work in culture that flow beyond the insular confines of our churches. And perhaps the project of bringing jazz into our churches can help remind us of the radical roots on our Christian tradition in Pentecost liberation. Although in our cultural context jazz is considered more "edgy" and subversive than the church, I would suggest that the prophetic potential of each is roughly parallel. On one hand, both jazz and the church can be, and have been, coopted and commodified under capitalism, domesticated as specialized forms of "entertainment" rather than liberative culture. That would be the Pentecostalism of the "prosperity gospel" and the jazz of Kenny G. On the other hand, both traditions contain the seeds of their own renewal—for the Spirit can always break in afresh. "I wish," said John Coltrane once, "that I could walk up to my music as if for the first time, as if I'd never heard it before." [10]

If and when we are conscious of the respective roots of jazz and the church in an insurgent, multicultural quest for freedom and equality, then we will see that both traditions are potentially prophetic, embodying both protest and renewal. This is why I have tried to "read" both movements as the children of the Pentecost revolution. Jazz and church are cousins beneath the skin, and only when we get the family reunited will we experience healing and wholeness. For we stand at a new historical moment marked by empire, war and oppression, in a country that, despite birthing both Pentecostalism and jazz, has also become unrivalled in its global power. The culture of fear and conformity and control is again locking us down, and we are in profound need of fresh animation by the Spirit.

I conclude with the legendary story about how Louis Armstrong "discovered" scatting, offering it as a sort of benediction on our topic. Brent Hayes Edwards writes:

> Scat begins with a fall, or so we're told. In his second Okeh recording session with his Hot Five on 26 February 1926 in Chicago, Louis Armstrong recorded a lyric by Boyd Atkins called "The Heebie Jeebies Dance." ...Supposedly the practice takes of the tune went smoothly, but a fortuitous fumble as the band was cutting the record transformed the song from one of the first journeyman efforts of a studio band to one of the most influential discs in American popular music. As Armstrong himself tells it:
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> > I dropped the paper with the lyrics--right in the middle of the tune . . . And I did not want to stop and spoil the record which was moving along so wonderfully . . . So when I dropped the paper, I immediately turned back into the horn and started to Scatting . . . Just as nothing had happened . . . When I finished the record I just knew the recording people would throw it out . . . And to my surprise they all came

[10] Cited in Nat Hentoff, American Music Is, De Capo Press, 2004, pp 141f.

> running out of the controlling booth and said--"Leave That In."

I am less interested in the truth or fiction of the anecdote than in its perseverance, its resilience as a touchstone legend of origin. What's fascinating about the story is the seeming need to narrate scat as a fall, as a literal dropping of the words--as an unexpected loss of the lyrics that finally proves enabling. The written words slip to the ground, and an entirely new approach to the singing voice is discovered in the breach, in the exigencies of musical time.[11]

It seems to me that the times demand that we Christians start abandoning the domesticated, tired scripts that prevail in our churches, and learn again how to let the subversive Spirit flow. I think jazz music can help us do that. But the task of "smuggling" jazz into the church must never be content merely with marketing a "hipper hymnody" to spectating congregations in need of novelty. To re-center worship around the *blue* note is necessarily to tap into the dangerous power of Pentecost. It is to open ourselves not to "the cool," but to the cry of the poor, and it is to take sides in a culture war that continues to exclude, scapegoat and demonize the ethnic or class or sexual "other." When jazz invites us to freedom in the sanctuary, it also compels us into the ongoing freedom struggle in the streets.

"The first jazz musician was a trumpeter, Buddy Bolden," Wynton Marsalis has said, "and the last will be a trumpeter, the archangel Gabriel." [12] That may be true, but the oldest horn of all was the Jubilee *shofar*, which announced an end to all economic and social oppression and marginalization in the community of the free. Those horns blew down Jericho's imperial walls of old, and their tune animated the prophetic ministries of Isaiah and Jeremiah, of Amos and Jesus. Those songlines have kept bubbling up throughout the long history of Christendom: among Benedictines and Franciscans, Anabaptist radicals and Baptist Levelers, and Quakers and Methodist reformers. That ancient blue note irrupted preeminently among African slaves in 19th century American fields, whose Spirituals and blues inspired the best in 20th century American music (from jazz to R&B) *and* politics (from Abolitionism to the Civil Rights movement).

William Seymour took up that Jubilee horn in a Pentecostal shout, and Coltrane found in it a Love Supreme. May we rediscover it in our own time! As the old camp meeting chant put it: "Fire take the church! Heart commence to turn over! Great Lord! The whole thing been jump!"

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[11] Brent Hayes Edwards, "Louis Armstrong and the Syntax of Scat," Critical Inquiry (28:3), Spring 2002.
[12] Cited in David Hajdu, "Wynton's Blues," The Atlantic Monthly, March, 2003, p. 46.