

2006 HAL WATKINS LECTURE ON LEADERSHIP

PLAYING JAZZ: LEADING IN LIQUID TIMES

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APPRECIATION

First a word of appreciation: My thanks to the National City Family—to the congregation who asked me to come and work with you for six months during 2005, and the National City Foundation, for the support of the ministry in this place and for the steady presence it has provided through the decades.

Thanks to Duane Cummins, Chair of the Foundation, who extended to me the invitation to come and lecture on leadership.

Thanks to Hal Watkins for the profound leadership you have offered the church for decades and to both you and your wife Evelyn for years of friendship and support.

INTRODUCTION

The title of this lecture might suggest to you that it is study of the leadership in New Orleans during and following the Katrina disaster last year. But, it is not. This is a lecture about leading in the church in a time when many seem to be drowning in a sea of evolving cultural complexity. It feels like we are living in times when institutions are not built on rocks or sand, but on ice—water that freezes for a season and then melts—only to refreeze again in the winter. Today I will explore ideas about how to lead in a church where the ground on which the church is built seems to quickly disappear.

First some disclaimers.

This lecture is incomplete. It is not designed to wrap up any issue about leadership. This is a lecture that is presented on a given date in a given time to a given group of people. It is a lecture written in the early part of a new century by a person who has been shaped by the last half of a previous century. It is written for people who care about the church in the United States and who are wondering how we might define ourselves so that the blessing of the gospel might be passed on to a new generation. It is presented in a different context than had we been talking about these issues in 1953. So, this lecture is incomplete—because the times, “they are a changin’.”

Two forces were at work in my life during the writing of this lecture.

One force at work is jazz. This lecture was written while I was listening to jazz. The horn and gravel voice of Louis Armstrong, the aged voice of B.B. King, the clear innocence of Eva Cassidy, the trumpet of Miles Davis, the soaring vocals of Ella Fitzgerald, the sweet trumpet of Duke Ellington.

And this is written under the watchful eyes of a set of jazz players sitting on my desk—built from wire and nuts and bolts. The curtain framed behind them reads, “Music is your own experience. It is your thoughts, your wisdom. If you don’t live it, it won’t come out of your horn.” This Charlie Parker quote and the wire sculpture is a gift from my wife Deborah who helps me celebrate a new understanding of my own role as a teacher and preacher who prefers to live and teach theology as jazz.

A second force is the continuous study of issues of leadership as I teach at Christian Theological Seminary. It is my job to offer courses on the theology of leadership. As jazz mates with leadership inside my soul, this lecture is born.

This lecture is also incomplete because—like jazz, it takes the gift from the instruments of all in the room to become music. And, it takes the listening and the living of those of you who came to

hear the lecture to determine if we can make music together. These words I speak and the words you hear will melt into the flow of our lives and continue flowing in the liquid of life. Either that, or they will go the way of all life when liquid is removed—they will return to dust.

CONTEXT

To understand anything about leadership, we must first understand something about the context in which leadership is being offered.

Context has always shaped Leadership. Follower-ship and leadership are interrelated. Effective leaders have good followers—good followers call effective leaders. There is chemistry between those who lead and follow which requires the presence of each. When followers call a leader who does not discern who they are and what their passion is, the possibility for a successful relationship is slim. If, on the other hand a leader seeks to lead followers who do not, or cannot grow to understand the leader, the relationship will not be very productive.

Moses was called to lead by God. He was called to lead slaves out of the bondage of Egypt into a new, unknown future. Had the slaves not cried out to God and had God not heard and then touched the heart of Moses with flames of passion that would not be quenched, no leading and no following would have happened except the leading and following of sheep on a hill side. Unless there had been a readiness on the part of the slaves to seek something more, Moses would have had a hard time getting the parade to the Red Sea started. If, on the other hand, Moses had not been ready to give up the life of a shepherd and suffer the pain of the people with them, he would have burned out before he ever started the parade.

The leadership offered by Moses was different from the leadership offered by the Apostle Paul because the context was different. The shape of the community where the activity was being asserted was different. Paul was leading many communities of people from a distance. He was an in-and-out leader. He went to see the people, helped them form themselves into Jesus communities and then nurtured them through occasional missives sent to keep them on track.

How each of these people understood the context shaped how they did their leadership. The effective leaders are always people who have been able to discern the context and what is required here and now.

Because each context is different, it would be presumptive of me to assume more than what is possible in this lecture. Therefore, I have chosen to only give hints at what might be important in leadership in the church today. Whether we are serving a church in the nation's capital or in rural Iowa, there are some general things that might be said about these times that can be helpful in thinking about being an effective leader in our time. While there are peculiar and unique dimensions to each of our contexts, there may be some general observations about the larger context that apply in some way to each of them.

Post Modern

Some people have suggested that we are living in post-modern context. This term, "post-modern" is used to reveal the experience of the collapse of modernism. Dick Hamm, in his forthcoming book Leading Adaptive Change in Mainline Churches, believes that the modern era in western civilization that began as early as the 15th and 16th centuries ended in the middle of the 20th century. He distinguishes the difference between these eras as follows: in the modern era, the universe was characterized by immutable physical laws; linear, rational, symmetrical thinking. The building block of the world order was nation-states. Authority was granted by office and was hierarchical. A broad social consensus controlled by white Anglo-Saxon males dominated. Communication was oratorical, formal and indirect and progress was inevitable. In the post-modern era, on the other hand, the universe is characterized by relativity. Thinking is non-linear, asymmetrical with many centers of focus--the building blocks are not only nation-states but mass communications and the market. Authority is granted by relationships; diversity of power means that there are diverse and varied voices shaping our world. Communication is conversational, direct and informal -- progress is not inevitable but it is possible.

This understanding of the context for leadership sets in motion different activities on the part of the leader.

Doubt

Another way of seeing our context is to look at history and to measure the times between periods of stability and periods of chaos. In her book, *Doubt: A History*, Jennifer Michael Hecht explores the great doubters and their legacy of innovation. She observes that history is written in celebration of the times of certainty—our maps are drawn codifying the times of stability and order. But every time of order and stability is followed by times of revolution, chaos and disorder. In her book, she celebrates the times of doubt and disorder as times of great creativity and generativity.

I would observe that the current cultural context is one of doubt characterized by a lack of trust in the modern world. Many of the institutions which were built following WWII that were designed to create stability are finding themselves unable to control the chaos of greed and war which continue to plague the human condition. Mainline protestant denominations that were formed in the modern era were all reorganized between 1957 and 1968 and all of them are finding that what they created is not creating the stability for which they had hoped. There is serious doubt that these organizations will be able to sustain themselves in the emerging world.

Reading the context as one of a period of doubt and chaos which will be followed by a new order is one way to try to get through these times.

Quantum Physics

But, I am not sure that this is an accurate description of our context. Whereas there may have been times when order and consistency could be developed and secured and built into institutions which embodied the new energies produced by times of chaos and disorder, I am not sure that stability really lasts that long.

I am more and more convinced that Margaret Wheatley, in her book, *Leadership and the New Science* is right when she talks of the world in terms of quantum physics. She observes that quantum physics has replaced Newtonian physics as a way of understanding the physical world. “Each of us lives and works in organizations designed from Newtonian images of the universe. We manage by separating things into parts; we believe that influence occurs as a direct result of

force exerted from one person to another; we engage in complex planning for a world that we keep expecting to be predictable, and we search continually for better methods of objectively perceiving the world.” (6) In “. . .the Newtonian model the world is characterized by materialism and reductionism—a focus on things rather than relationships and a search, in physics, for the basic building blocks of matter.” (9) This view of the world sees organizations and life machine-like -- parts come together and create a whole—parts acting on each other to create a response.

Wheatley then observes that the new science grounded in quantum physics operates on the assumption that organizations cannot be changed simply by “imposing a model developed elsewhere. So little transfers to, or even inspires, those trying to work in their own organizations. Second, and much more important, the new physics cogently explains that there is no objective reality out there waiting to reveal its secrets. There are no recipes or formulae, no checklists or advice that describe ‘reality.’ There is only what we create through our engagement with others and with events. Nothing really transfers; everything is always new and different and unique to each of us.”(7) In quantum physics, “*relationship* is the key determiner of what is observed and how particles manifest themselves. Particles come into being and are observed only in relationship to something else. They do not exist as independent ‘things.’ “These unseen *connections* between what were previously thought to be separate entities are the fundamental element of creation.”(10)

This understanding of the contemporary context points to an ever changing network of relationships which must continually be reassessed and reorganized.

Liquid Modernity

Because this is the nature of the world in which we live, I find the context for leading congregations in our time best described as liquid. In his book *Liquid Modernity*, Zygmunt Bauman suggests that the times we live in are more liquid than solid. He quotes Paul Valery who says, “Interruptions, incoherence, surprise are the ordinary conditions of our life. They have even become real needs for many people, whose minds are no longer fed . . . by anything but

sudden changes and constantly renewed stimuli . . . We can no longer bear anything that lasts. We no longer know how to make boredom bear fruit.”

He continues, “It is now the smaller, the lighter, the portable that signifies improvement and ‘progress.’ Traveling light, rather than holding on tightly to things deemed attractive for their reliability and solidity—that is, for their heavy weight, substantiality and unyielding power of resistance—is now the asset of power.”

He suggests that becoming too grounded in business inhibits one’s freedom to adapt to new and changing circumstances. He compares Rockefeller who “might have wished to make his factories, railroads and oilrigs big and bulky and own them for a long, long time to come. . . . Bill Gates, however feels no regret when parting with possessions in which he took pride yesterday; it is the mind-boggling speed of circulation, of recycling, ageing, dumping and replacement which brings profit today—not durability and lasting reliability of the product.” (13-14)

Now, I know that not everyone likes the sensation of floating in liquid times. And I know that there will be many who believe this assessment of the context is incorrect. I too find myself longing for more stable and predictable times. I am just as inclined as anyone else to cling to the more familiar ways of doing things than to let go of the shore of my island and swim out into the unknown deep.

But, if we are to imagine how to be church in the emerging world, it is important to at least consider the possibility that the context is as some of these thinkers describe and to think about how we might be effective leaders in such a time.

The question is, how do we offer leadership in the church in these liquid times when the virtues of the nomadic life are becoming greater than the virtues of the settled life? How do we offer leadership when loyalty to institutions is not a virtue—or when institutional loyalty to individuals does not exist at all?

JAZZ

I want to play with the possibility that leading a jazz band might give some clues for how to lead congregations in these liquid times. Now, any metaphor is inadequate and its revelatory power is partial. Metaphors point to things, don't exhaust them.

But, I use this metaphor precisely because of its liquid quality. Jazz has structure and rhythm, form and style. I choose this metaphor because I believe that flourishing in liquid times requires structure. But, most jazz is designed to be fluid as well. It is designed to give outlines for the music and encourages improvisation and experimentation. For the church to flourish, it too needs a structure that invites and encourages improvisation and experimentation.

And I choose this metaphor because its birthplace is not unlike the birthplace of the Christian faith. It was born in the streets and back alleys of New Orleans. It, like the gospel, was the voice of the poor, the marginalized and the despised. It, like Jesus, enjoyed itself among those proper society rejected. It was the voice of many black musicians when Jim Crow drove them from recital halls of the powerful to the brothels of the outcast. It, like Jesus, was accused of being indiscriminate in its free gift of love.

When we discuss leadership in church during liquid times, I believe we need hints which leave room for a great deal of freedom. To lead congregations in a time when church is not as valued by the dominate culture requires that we find friends among those who know how to survive and flourish on the margins of society.

What hints for leadership can we glean from jazz.

Live

The first requirement of a jazz band leader is to live life. Charlie Parker said, "Music is your own experience. It is your thoughts, your wisdom. If you don't live it, it won't come out of your horn." Life, with all its pain and pleasure, its tears and laughter, its vice and virtue, is the source of soulful jazz. When you hear the wailing sax of Charlie Parker, you don't just hear notes. You

hear notes dripping with the experience of life. The notes are coated with passion and desire. Screaming loneliness and playful teasing dance through the melody. The tongue can taste the heat and bittersweet passions of love.

This is not only the center of leadership for jazz, but it is the center of leadership for the church. The Christian faith is a lived faith. It isn't just something that is thought or believed. It is lived. And if it is a lived faith, it is infused with blood and tears, delight and love. It is a faith in which the divine and human wrestle daily to create a space for life to be lived and given in blessing.

As a leader in the church, you are one whose very presence is warm with memory and rich with struggle. You are people who have courage to test the spirits—to face your fear and to keep showing up. You are those who have the courage to complain and argue, to dance and rejoice, to share and to be alone to know your own heart. You are those who live.

Love

A good jazz band leader is one who not only lives, but one who loves the music in her soul. The only way a leader can endure the stress of working with others to make music is because they love the music they create. A jazz musician loves the creative energy of making notes from the soul experiences of life. She loves being recreated by music she plays.

This is true as well of an effective leader of a congregation. You who are most effective are ones who love the music of the divine (the gospel) which is within you. You love the energy of creativity in making that gospel incarnate in a community of people. Some say that a good leader must love the people. True. But at the core of the leader loves the good news. That love becomes both a reason for being with people and a blessing of the people. You love the dynamics of making music with people. You love bringing of your own music to the surface and sharing it with others as an invitation for them to share their music with the world.

Lead

A jazz band has to be led. As a leader you have to assert yourself. You have to put your song out there. You have to live your love out loud. You set the tone. You set the beat. You

determine what the main structure of the tune will be. It is your music that you know—from inside your soul. It isn't just music that you construct in your head or music you inherited from others, but it is music that comes from the inside of the body and soul as well as the head and heart. The leader of the jazz band plays music from the heart.

Daring to put your own song out there takes courage. Others may not like what they hear. They may not follow your music because it doesn't make sense to them.

But the authority of the leader in a jazz band is not like that of a military general or of a factory supervisor. Jazz is lived music. The leader leads by spending time, living with the band. In the time together the group learns to know each other. The band learns what the leader is doing by living it together. It is in the developing relationships within the band that the band knows each other and knows the heart of the leader.

Many problems in the church today are related to the inability of people to spend time together. People come to worship and want it to be relevant. They want it to have some immediate consequence that fulfills some internal desire of the worshipper. Worship, which has been defined as “wasting time with God,” is not possible. People are in such a hurry to receive some benefit that they fail to understand that “hanging out” in and of itself is rich and transforming.

A community of faith must spend time together with its leader just playing together. The leader can then step out and lead with heart and soul. Leadership is not only a matter of technique. It isn't just a matter of how to do it right. It is a matter of presence. It is a matter of being fully present in the situation so that the intuition, the heart and the soul have input into the decisions about what actions are called for. It is what Ron Heifetz and Marty Linsky, in their book *Leadership on the Line*, call adaptive leadership. It is the ability to interact with the life around you and adapt your actions for what is appropriate.

This is critical for leadership in liquid times. Sometimes the water freezes and it is important to build a shelter on the ice. But other times, the water melts and a different kind of shelter is needed. One that floats and can stand the sea storm of instability is now called for.

Lead from the inside

The leader of the jazz band leads from the inside. She does not ask of her players more than she asks of herself. She is with the band, not apart from it. Leading from the inside helps prevent the band each going its own direction. Staying connected to the community is critical for leading a jazz band.

So to in leading in a congregation. The Christian faith is incarnational. That is, we believe that God came and dwelt among us in Jesus of Nazareth. God lives on the inside of the community, leading from within, not from without. God is not one who sits removed from the struggles of human existence, making pronouncements about what is good and right and manipulating the powers to make sure they do the divine bidding. God is one with us. God chooses to lead from within.

The pastor is a baptized Christian, thus one with the whole community of faith. He may be ordained, set apart, to lead. But being set apart doesn't mean exiting the contingencies of the community itself. The leader in the congregation takes the same risks that he asks of those who are in the community with him.

Leading from the inside is a way of sharing consequences. It is leading as does the divine—suffering the consequences of actions—living and dying in flesh—rising in hope and courage. The community's success is the result of the whole community playing their music and creating a song that blesses the world. It isn't the leader alone who is to be honored, but the gifts of the whole community given in generous grace.

Rest

In a jazz band, the leader then rests. Resting gives space. Others get a chance to play their music. The leader doesn't fill the space, but sets boundaries in which the others might have space to play their music.

One of the disciplines of Christian living is making an offering. It is a practice we symbolize ritualistically in our worship. But, within a community that is making music together, it is important that persons have a chance to play the music in them.

Riffs by other instrumentalists in a jazz band are variations of the music of the leader. If the leader is playing the gospel, then the variations of the other instrumentalists will be gospel. But, they will be nuanced by the peculiar life experience of the soul which is singing through the horn, the drum or the stringed instrument.

A church which makes its witness known and which lives and thrives through diverse and changing times is one in which the peculiar differences in life experiences are honored and invited to be given in the space. A leader who rests gives space for the church to take varied characteristics which will serve it in varied times.

The times are liquid. People live a nomadic life. A young person being educated today is likely to have seven different careers before he/she retires. No one stays in one place any more. Companies will not promise the security they once promised. Individuals pursue the dreams which change and morph as the spirit moves.

You church leaders must rest so that there is room for more people to move in and play their own music, even for a short amount of time. This is one of the hardest things for many leaders of established congregations to do. There is such a commitment to the maintaining of home the way it is that we are afraid to step aside and let others play their music. We welcome them with open arms on Sunday morning and we even invite them to dinner, but when it comes to playing with the budget—well, we are uncertain if they will play the right song.

The leader must be able to rest in a way which frees up the band to play. A leader does not exit the stage. She is there, her presence providing the tone, the structure, the stability, so that others may play—may try new things—may risk new notes, uncertain of the outcome. The leader is present with strength to assure structure.

But, there is a space created where new ideas have a chance to be experienced and tested. Some of them contribute nicely to the music while others may lead the music down a path that is unproductive. But, if there is no room to play, we restrict the unique soulful contribution of the other musicians.

There will necessarily be conflict in the role of the leader. The Bible is full of stories of tension as the gospel stretched its spirit and sought to play beyond the bounds of its home. It was born in the crib of Jewish parents. But much of what we know as the New Testament is written in an effort to allow the gospel to play outside its Jewish home. It was born in rural Galilee. But much of the New Testament is a struggle to figure out how to let the gospel play in cosmopolitan Rome or Corinth.

Listen

When the leader rests, she, like others in the band has a chance to listen to the gifts of the others. To listen is to understand. And to understand is to be open to developing ways of incorporating the particular gifts of that player in new and different ways.

Ron Heifetz, working out of the Leadership Institute at the Harvard Business School, says that a leader is both a participant (dancer) in the organization and also is able to get in the balcony and look at the patterns of the dancers on the dance floor. Too many leaders get absorbed in the institution and do not take the time to step back, or as Heifetz says, get in the balcony and keep focused on the big picture.

The leader of a jazz band listens to all the musicians. She focuses on the larger picture.

This is possible when you as a leader take on the spirit of an explorer. When Deb and I were on our honeymoon in St. John, she read an article to me about the three archetypes of human longing—hero, lover and explorer. The article was about advertising's appeal to one of these three longings in the human heart.

As I was listening to that, I realized that most of what I have known as church has sought to appeal to the hero archetype. We are encouraged to help save the world. On some occasions, we are encouraged to love God but that is quickly followed with admonition to love others too.

But, seldom are we simply invited to explore the graces of God and revel in them. Seldom are we encouraged to simply soak in the gifts of grace that come to us in the community of baptized. Seldom are we invited to slow down to listen to the grace notes of the universe as they flow over us in the created order. Seldom are we invited on an adventure of discovery of ways God might be revealed in the songs of the poor, the souls of the wounded and the dreams of the distressed.

Jazz invites you into that exploration with its move from sorrow to joy, its meandering down the streets of death and its dancing in the cemetery. It bleeds with the broken hearted and lingers with those who are in love.

I am convinced that effective leadership in our times requires that we not only play the gospel song of the saving power of God, but also that we hear the gospel song in the pure delight of God in the created order. To lead effectively, we must listen to the whole scale of human experience and play it back in notes that people may know themselves as a part of this created, dancing joy.

Improvise

One of the delights of jazz is improvisation. Within the structure set by the leader and the music, jazz creates space for improvisation—creating something that was not foreseen. The leader plays the home tune and the band plays around with the notes, creating new things and then the band comes home at the end.

In liquid times, leaders need to know how to improvise. Things happen that are not foreseen and leaders must adapt. If you are building on ice and the ice suddenly melts, you have to build a boat.

And it requires that you be able to make do with the things that are at hand. As leaders of congregations it is tempting to believe that life will be good if we simply get the right tools—the

right pastor, the right lay leadership, the right person to give a million dollars, the right musician, the right mission. To improvise means that we don't sit around and try to get the right anything—it requires that we take what we have at hand and make good news out of it right here and now.

This comes from listening. I went to the Improv Theater in Fort Worth, TX with my daughter and her husband. The actors on stage would read newspaper articles at random, pick someone in the audience and learn something about them and then make up a skit based on the story in the newspaper and the life of the person in the audience.

After the play, I had a chance to ask the lead actor, “How do you do that?” “How do you create out of such chaos?” “It is all about listening,” he said. He explained that close attention to the words and body language of the actor who spoke before you would give you a sense of how you might respond.

Leadership requires the humility to change directions on the basis of what you hear.

My friend, Dick Hamm and I took a trip to Alaska a few years ago. We flew into Barrow which is the northern most point of the United States. Above the Arctic Circle, it is cold. Our guide was telling us the story of the coming of the Army Corp of Engineers decades ago. They wanted to build houses for the people moving there and to build a hospital.

When they started building, the natives told them that building a house on a foundation would not work. The strangers from the warmer climates further south thought they knew better. They had built houses before. But when they built the houses, they discovered that they began collapsing. The heat in the house on the ground melted the permafrost and the house's foundation gave way. So, the next year the Corp went back to the natives and said, “OK, what should we do?” They responded, “Build the houses on untreated poles.” The Corp said, “No, we can't do that, they will rot. We have to build the houses on treated poles.” So, they built the houses the next year, driving the treated poles in the ground. They built the houses and when winter came, the poles started shooting out of the ground, causing the houses to collapse.

Treated poles became projectiles when the ground froze in the winter. The Corp asked again, “What shall we do?” The natives said, “Build the building on untreated poles. The water will be absorbed into the wood and then when it freezes, it will stay in place.” And so, the third year, the Corp built the buildings on untreated poles and they still stand today.

Listening to those who live in the location will help the leader know how to change to be effective.

Play Backup

The leader of the band doesn’t only play the music of the soul, resting now and again and listening to the others in the band. The leader also plays back-up. The leader encourages others—supporting their music. Playing backup is often harder than stepping forward and playing the lead. It requires humility. It requires the ability to listen carefully to know what the leader is doing so that you know what kind of backup to play.

Leading a congregation requires the ability to encourage by playing backup to the music of others. Some people need a fairly strong backup to make their music push forward. Others need subtle notes to suggest harmony or disharmony, but each encouraging the peculiar music of the soul of the other instrumentalist.

Play

At its root, leading a jazz band reflects the spirit of play. To play comes from the old Germanic word meaning “to rejoice, be glad.” To play jazz the group must have freedom to play. That is, the instrumentalist must have the freedom to allow the notes to move where they will—within the structure of the song set by the leader. This requires the freedom to screw up. Musicians who play together offer each other the grace necessary to screw up.

You who desire to lead congregations in these liquid times must lead with the grace to screw up. Offer grace to yourself and others. For new and creative sounds to emerge in the congregation, for the gospel to be played with fresh notes for fresh times, grace must abound. Mercy must liberate us from becoming our mistakes.

A playful spirit is consistent with the theology of the Christian faith. The Bible reminds us that what we humans create is not permanent or ultimate. All that is created comes from dust and returns to dust. Without the liquid divine flowing through the dust, it disappears. The institutions we create will disappear. Our successes and failures will die. Therefore, we can lighten up, play, experiment, try new heart's desires. We can float on the liquid life which carries creation.

And because we can lighten up, we can enjoy life as it comes to us. It is a sin to ignore the music in our own souls and the music of others—because it is ignoring the divine song planted in creation. Our life is one in which we are called to enjoy what is because it will never be again. Jazz musicians know that the song will never be the same again. It comes from the soul and the soul changes. Jazz is not just what happens on stage, but it is the music that happens in the heart of the listener as well. Therefore, the music will never again be what it is at this moment in time. Therefore, joy is in the moment—experience its intensity in the present.

Leadership in the church is too often obsessed with making things the way they were or structuring things so that they will be predictable. And in the effort to make something that isn't, we miss the joy of what is. In an effort to play God and create what is not, we miss the joy of being human and receiving the unadulterated gift of grace that comes to us in the lives shared in the moment.

CONCLUSION

We live in liquid times. The material in which life swims is fluid and constantly changing. Leading churches in these times requires the ability to adapt and change. Jazz is a form of music which has both form and freedom, fixed rhythms and flexibility. It is a way of making music which honors the patterns set by leaders and affirms the unique gifts of those who follow the leader. For the church to live in these nomadic times with grace and blessing for the world, clergy and lay leaders might all learn from the leaders of the jazz bands.