

Prayer Guide

African-American Gospel Worship Culture

The gift of uninhibited, emotional celebration of Freedom in Christ

African slave trade roots – once in U.S they inserted Jesus into the center of their African worldview to make a new religion.

“Eastern” worldview: regards the body and spirit as one, not separated like “Western” thought. Therefore the experience of worship must be an EMOTIONAL experience with the Holy Spirit and with truth.

“Eastern” worldview is focused on community and relationships, therefore worship is both a vertical and horizontal experience.

Musical history:

- Music has always bonded the African-American people together.
- The invisible church – spirituals delivered messages, communicated anger against being inferior.
- Call and response – Thomas Dorsey sophisticated this form we now associate as Gospel.
- Music through the ages communicated what was happening sociologically within the Black Community.
- “Cosmic Blues” - the content of the songs always dealt with the real difficulties of life, but always stressed Hope in God.
- New forms of music were all met with hostility and skepticism. Beginning with blues, then jazz, then urban R & B, rap...

Emphasized Characteristics of God & Important themes

Gospel Worship Culture	Caucasian Evangelical Worship Culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referenced as King of Kings • Celebration of God’s power • God’s faithfulness over history • Promise of freedom for the oppressed • Promise of provision, abundant blessing • God of Justice • The cross = ultimate demonstration of Power over evil and death • Our response to the cross = freedom from bondage of sin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referenced as friend and father • Celebration of God’s goodness • God’s love and grace • Creator of the natural world • Our response to an attribute of God’s activity or character • Holy of Holies • The cross = God’s sacrificial love for us. • Our response to the cross = forgiveness renews commitment to personal piety.

Role of the Worship Leader & how the song is led

Gospel Worship Culture:	Caucasian Evangelical Worship Culture:
Confident Spiritual Leader of a communal experience	Teacher & Guide to the Throne Room
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directs the group to follow the way he/she 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaches aspects of God’s character and how

<p>feels the Holy Spirit leading. This is saying to the enemy that they are unified against him.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “hipe person” creates energy and models giving everything in worship. • Exhorts the congregation to do things together ex. Raise your hands, get up on your feet! • Storyteller of their own testimony of the song’s theme. • Demonstrates their vocal ability to give honor to God • Exudes uninhibited confidence because of how God has come through for them. • Determine the length and direction of the song and the transitions between. • New songs can be “written” on the spot coming out of a line from a previous song. • Lead with eyes open, and interacting with congregation while singing. • Constantly singing or saying the next line the congregation will sing • Rarely sing and play an instrument at the same time. 	<p>we should respond.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaks before songs starts and then doesn’t attract attention. • Gives permission for people to respond individually, however they feel. • Models an authentic personal worshipper • Sing and play an instrument at the same time (acoustic guitar or keyboard) • The song direction is often pre-set with the leader either speaking or singing the phrase they are to sing next. • Most of the congregation knows how to sing the songs even without a leader present.
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Distinctive Musical Characteristics

Gospel Worship Culture:	Caucasian Evangelical Worship Culture:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetition is essential to “feel” the words of the song and make them your own expression. • Song is broken down into parts which are interchangeable and moveable. • Songs always grow to a climax with volume and musical complexity. • Energy is generated by raising the key. • Musical excellence is a HIGH value and measured by the individual skill of each player, the complexity and layers of sound and whether the band is “tight”. • Musical interludes at the end of each song to “linger” with verbal exhortation or testimony spoken over. • The volume is usually loud, even in slow songs. • Congregation participates by singing harmonies, adding rhythm by clapping or tambourines, singing their own words, dancing and speaking back to the leader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General order of the song and number of repetitions is usually established beforehand. • Repetition is usually only 2-3 times, and usually only the chorus, or the last line as a tag. • Instrumentalists don’t solo very often as to not attract attention from the task of worshipping. • Songs can end on a final chord and silence in between is accepted as normal. • Silence is common in services. The range of volume is smaller than Gospel. • Songs can be interrupted with scripture reading, drama, corporate prayers, announcements as they fit into the theme. • Individuals can be doing their own thing, responding however they like but it is subdued. • Values uniform participation “singing with one voice” all the same words, notes and only occasional pre-taught harmony.

Distinctive elements in the service:

Gospel Worship Culture:	Caucasian Evangelical Worship Culture:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service is described as “having church” an event, not a place. • Singing is usually done in a block uninterrupted before the sermon. • The service feels like an interaction with a Holy “other” God. • The expectation of the Holy Spirit is that she will direct the singing and it will go as long as she needs to do her work. This is defined in an emotional way. • Ministry through musical worship is highly regarded and the pastor may not give his sermon if the singing is ministering powerfully. • The pastor may sing his sermon, or songs may be written on the spot from a line in his sermon. • Worship is a whole day experience. You dress your best to honor God, and you gather as His people for food afterward and possibly another service in the evening. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most often described as “going to church” and is usually strictly confined by an agreed upon time limit. • Singing is considered one piece of content that is building the theme of the service. Like building a cake, one layer is music, another drama, another scripture reading, another corporate prayer. • The expectation of the Holy Spirit’s work is that she will convict and inspire through the total experience of the content, not in just one song. • Ministry through musical worship is not regarded as highly as the preaching and is often cut if time is running too long. • The service feels like an interaction with a familiar God, casual and friendly.

Common Phrases that a worship leader may say before, during, or after the song

- Somebody say...(glory, hallelulah)
- Put you hands together!
- Come on!
- Let’s sing it!
- Look at somebody and say...
- Glory to God!
- Hallelulah!
- Thank you Jesus
- We gotta lift up the name of Jesus
- Everybody lift your voice and sing
- He’s worthy!
- Yes Lord!
- Come on and bless the Lord!
- You got to give your best praise
- If he has been good to you sing...
- If you love the Lord sing...
- Come on and make a joyful noise in this house