

Components of a “Worship Culture”

(adapted from Jeff Todd Titon’s “Model of a Music-Culture” [2009])

1. *Ideas about Worship*

- Describe your church’s **beliefs** about worship.
 - What *is* worship? What is worship supposed to do?
- Describe your church’s **aesthetics** (ideas about what is beautiful), and give some examples of how aesthetic preferences are embodied in worship practices.
- In what **contexts** (when and where) does worship happen in congregational life? Are there any practices deemed appropriate in one setting but inappropriate in another?
- What sources chronicle the **history** of your church worship culture?

2. *The Social Organization of Worship*

- Describe **worship’s “division of labor”** – who participates in it? What are the different roles for participants and leaders? Is there anyone who is not allowed to participate in leadership?
- What is the **status** of the worship leader(s) relative to congregation members, and the **social role** of leaders in relationship to one another?
- Describe the **spatial orientation** of worship leaders and worshipers.
- How do the factors of **gender, ethnicity, class, or age** affect how people participate in worship?

3. *Liturgical and Musical Repertoires*

- Describe **style characteristics** of verbal and musical genres used within worship.
- List the predominant **musical genre** performed in worship.
- Describe the **texts** (including song lyrics) used in worship. Are they fixed, seasonal, improvised, etc.?
- How are liturgical texts and congregational music **composed**?
- How are worship practices **learned** and **transmitted**?
- Are there particular bodily **movements** that accompany worship?

4. *Material Culture of Worship*

- Give several examples of objects belonging to the **material culture** of worship.
- How and when did these objects come to be a part of this worship culture?
- Do these objects have symbolic value? If so, what do they symbolize?
- What audio and visual **media** are used in worship (e.g., books, printed bulletins, projection screens)? How do these various media facilitate (or fail to facilitate) participation in worship?
- Describe the worship **space**. What elements are fixed and which can be altered?