

Feel a Thought

April 23 2023

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

– Paul, Colossians 3:16, 17

“Where words leave off, music begins.” – Heinrich Heine

Why does God want us to sing? If all we are supposed to do is “teach and admonish one another,” then it would seem a good sermon or Bible class would be far more appropriate than singing.

“Music expresses that which cannot be put into words and that which cannot remain silent.”

Victor Hugo

While a lesson appeals to our intellect, music is played with our hearts (Ephesians 5:19) and the heart is a powerful thing. You can reason with an intellect, but not so much with the seat of feelings. Perhaps that explains why we feel so strongly about our tastes in music.

My Orthodox friends love the ancient monophonic chants. And because they feel so strongly about their style of music, they believe four-part harmony distracts from



the sacred texts with its unnatural ornamentation. So should we only chant?

On the other hand, my young Millennial friends long for a total immersion in the worship experience. Their ears are delighted with overwhelming explosions of sound. Their eyes watch colorful backdrops of pictures moving with the beat of the music and their whole-body shakes with the tactile experience of rhythmic movement, clapping and lifting holy hands. For them, worship in song involves as many different senses as possible. Simple song is drab in comparison.

My southern *Sacred Harp* friends delight in camp meeting choruses and shape notes, while my sophisticated choral friends believe in offering only the best music to God. Perfect pitch, spot

on timing and virtuosity are the keys to a successful performance before God. Nothing else will do.

So what kind of music does God enjoy? Chants? Stately hymns or rambunctious praise? Perhaps the answer can be found in Who God is: our Father. And I know Fathers love the music of their children especially when that music comes from their loving hearts.

Be filled with the Spirit, making melody to the Lord with your heart.

Paul, Ephesians 5:18, 19

“Words make you think. Music makes you feel. A song makes you feel a thought.”

E.Y. Harburg

