

## *Our Philosophy of Teaching Beginning Organ*

by Wayne Leupold

Many young people find the organ fascinating, with all its keyboards, pedals, buttons, stop knobs, and multiple sounds. Children can become interested in the organ through exposure in their church services, demonstrations by the church organist, and different types of events presented by AGO chapters or other groups of interested individuals. When such interest is awakened, there should be an immediate follow-up by getting them on organ benches, using publications from *Discover the Organ*<sup>®</sup>, studying and playing the organ at whatever keyboard level they are. If they have no keyboard experience, start them on the organ from the very beginning of their study, using *Discover the Basics*<sup>®</sup> books. Now there is a method available that can develop a child's keyboard ability on the organ from the very beginning of his/her study of music. (Other instruments also could be studied simultaneously, if desired.)

Some organists think that students should not begin the study of the organ until they have had a number of years of piano study to first develop a basic keyboard technique. History clearly shows us that this is not necessary. What organist who lived prior to 1800 ever played the pianoforte before beginning organ study? Obviously no organists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries ever studied the pianoforte. But, yet, many fine keyboardists and organists existed in those centuries. How, then, did they develop keyboard technique? The harpsichord was an expensive instrument usually only found in the homes of the wealthy. The common practice keyboard instrument of those times was the clavichord, whose touch is lighter than any electronic keyboard instrument available today. So, clearly, a good keyboard technique can be developed on a light keyboard action. What is important is a solid and comprehensive curriculum of technical studies and scales such as are found in our comprehensive series. *Modern Keyboard Technique*.

For the organ to remain the principal instrument in the church, we must train more organists. To accomplish this, we must first expose the organ to more young people, and second, begin to teach the organ to children at much earlier ages than previously has been done. There is no reason why young children cannot begin both their musical education and the development of their keyboard skills at the organ. Let's have more children *Discover the Organ*<sup>®</sup>.

Wayne Leupold Editions, Inc., with its various series of organ-teaching publications, offers a thorough pedagogical approach to the teaching of the keyboard at the organ at all levels: (1) from a very first keyboard lesson (*Discover the Basics*<sup>®</sup>) through second-through sixth-year keyboard study (*Discover the Organ*<sup>®</sup>); (2) from an intermediate level (3rd or 4th year) pianist's first organ lesson (*Organ Skills*<sup>™</sup>) through highly advanced organ techniques (also *Organ Skills*<sup>™</sup>); and (3) a comprehensive approach to the historical techniques and performance practices of each national school within each historical period (*Annotated Performer's Editions* and *Historical Organ Techniques and Repertoire*).