

# Nothing matches this friendly sound

I remember an unforgettable experience that was mine at the Radio City Music Hall in New York City. I was in the audience watching a musical show on the stage of the Radio City Hall and, in the closing number of that production a large college chorale was singing with a full orchestra a medley of patriotic songs of America. They were singing the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" as the final song and during the third verse of the text something very exciting happened as the male voices were softly singing "In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea with a glory...."

At first it was almost imperceptible, but gradually like a warm breath, a friendly presence that seemed all around you. I could feel a growing base support flooding in underneath their voices. Then, as the chorus grew, in strength this marvelous sound itself became stronger until finally at the lofty height of the song now with orchestra and all voices at full strength singing "Glory! Glory, hallelujah..." I saw the source of that grand sound; a single spotlight illuminated the keyboard and the organist of the great pipe organ of the Radio



## From Your Pastor

*Earl F. Palmer*

City Music Hall. equal its bigness in volume, its mature gentleness, its playfulness, its many voices. Concert halls have borrowed it, but the pipe organ was born in the Christian church.

City Music Hall.

I was a high school junior then and it was my first encounter with a grand pipe organ. That summer evening began for me a friendship with the greatest in sheer size of all musical instruments.

The pipe organ is a gift that the Christian church gave to the world. There is nothing like it with its manuals, pedals, ranks, hundreds of pipes and reeds; nothing can

The Christian church also gave to the world some of its great musicians who loved to play this instrument: J.S. Bach, Dietrich Buxtehude, Albert Schweitzer, Diane Bish, Jo Ann Stremmer, Winston Johnson, Mary Taylor.

We live in an era of apparent reality, of electronic imitation and digital sampling; these technologies have tried to simulate the sounds of pipes and strings and even the human voice, but there is a difference when real wind moves through real pipes and reeds to create sound.

I am grateful that the Christian church continues to give this gift to our generation so that we have a chance to hear that sound J.S. Bach first played for his Lutheran congregation in the Leipzig cathedral, "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring." It was the strong, vivid, assuring sound of a pipe organ.

Best of all, I wish that every girl and boy could have the thrill of singing a hymn like "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and then to feel that warm wind from the massive bass pipes of a great organ come in underneath their voices, so that another teenager in another time would wonder where this friendly sound was coming from.