



Preface

Robert Novak, in a speech to the Notre Dame Club of Chicago on January 24, 1990, stated that the twentieth century “was perhaps the worst century our planet has yet endured—spectacular advancements in science and technology obscured by evil pure and unadorned.”¹ It was a time of fundamental change. Political, social, and economic shifts were overshadowed by the creeping awareness that the basic presuppositions which had governed life were somehow outmoded and no longer viable. A new moral ethic was accepted as normative.

The church was deeply affected by these changes. Though often ineffective, its mission compromised and truncated by a well-meaning accommodation to culture, it carried on. Much church music (denominational as well as that of mass evangelism, certain parachurch organizations, and the charismatic and renewal movements) often unwittingly absorbed some of the less noble traits of our changing society. As a result, this music tended to reinforce the very values the church professed unacceptable.

But survival is not enough! We want to win the world. To do that will require a reevaluation of much of what we presently take for granted—even in the music of the church. The immediacy of facing into the twenty-first century presses us to begin without delay. A change in direction is needed.

The present volume attempts such redirection. *Discipling Music Ministry: Twenty-first Century Directions* reviews the past, evaluates the present, and suggests a course for the future—the way of discipline. The book takes the position that faith and works are interactive. The gospel is not communicated solely by the texts of church music. Church music proclaims the gospel through the actual music itself! The art form (music) is far more influential and powerful in affirming or denying lived-out faith than we commonly believe. Therefore we need a heightened awareness of what the notes, rhythms, and harmonies of our church music imply.

The word “discipling” in the title *Discipling Music Ministry* is intended to be both verbal and adjectival. On the one hand, as a verb, “discipling” acts upon the phrase “music ministry”; it *does* something to music ministry. The music ministry itself is “disciplined”; ministry is the *receiver* of “discipling” action. We must discover what specific musical characteristics and traits, what musical vocabulary, what kinds and styles of music will result in a disciplined music. That disciplined music, in turn, causes ministry to be disciplined insofar as such music is incorporated into the music program. Music ministry is disciplined by adopting a music of discipline.

On the other hand, as an adjective, “discipling” describes a type of music ministry, one in which music ministry is the *giver* of “discipling” action. Music ministry modified by the adjective “discipling” shows that this type of music ministry is itself an agent of discipleship. That is, the primary function of a “discipling music ministry” is the training of the believer. The specific goal of that training or discipline, as well as suggestions for implementing such discipline, is the subject of this book.

Continuing where my *Music & Ministry: A Biblical Counterpoint* (Hendrickson Publishers, 1984) left off, the present volume will serve to expand the vision of the reader concerning the place church music has in the discipling process. After all, the great commission does not command us to make weaklings, but disciples. The music which disciplines is the church music of the future.

Notes

1. Robert Novak from a speech delivered on January 24, 1990, to the Notre Dame Club of Chicago.