

Preface

The Troubleshooting Guide to Christian Education

The first edition of this book was written while I was serving as a senior pastor. Prior to that role I had worked as a youth pastor, and then a minister of Christian education. The principles that I had learned in the trenches, and had acquired as an educational consultant, I desired to pass on to fellow pastors. *The Trouble-Shooting Guide to Christian Education* was my first book on discipleship within the local church.

After seventeen years of pastoral ministry I moved into a teaching role at Bethel Seminary. In addition to my work with students, my new role allows me the opportunity to consult with dozens of churches each year. What I am learning about discipleship from these congregations has been woven into the new edition of the book you are presently reading.

Members of a pastoral staff are called to be leaders of a team. In the game of discipleship they cannot play all of the positions by themselves. They must be coaches of others who will play the game. They share their leadership with assistant coaches who further develop the players. The teaching ministry of the local church is played well when the lead pastor, staff members, and program leaders manage well.

Although there are many comprehensive books that present the church's educational task in great detail, most pastors cannot find the time to read a four hundred page book on the theology of Christian education, the Christian educational process or even the administration of the Christian education program. Many of the senior ministers and pastoral staff with whom I fellowship share similar basic concerns:

- What program is right for my church?
- Where do I find enough teachers for Sunday School?
- How can we train people so that they become good teachers?
- What if we don't have enough money or adequate facilities for a good program?

The primary intent of the *Troubleshooting Guide* has not been to write a textbook for Christian education majors in seminary, although there is significant benefit to them in this volume. Rather, it has been to provide practitioners with a resource guide for effective administration of the church's Christian education ministry.

This book has been written for my colleagues who share in the teaching ministry of the local church. It is my hope that these suggestions will help pastors and lay leaders multiply their effectiveness in guiding their educational teams.

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