

Teaching Teachers to Teach by Donald L. Griggs

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Teaching Today's Teachers to Teach by Donald L. Griggs is the study on the shortcomings and peculiarities of the Bible teaching in the church today. Donald Griggs is the world-known prominent Christian tutor and instructor who has taught many church leaders, mentors, pastors, and lecturers throughout the US continent for over 40 years. As the author often pointed out his mission was to help the educators-to-be or the existing pastors to engage younger generation in the learning process with fewer barriers on its way, however, preserving enjoyment and the feeling of the right path taken. Barriers here would be methods or techniques proved intimidating or threatening.

Donald L. Griggs produced 168-page comprehensive instruction study structured into 13 chapters. Each chapter presents the issue or a question topical for Bible teaching in the twenty-first century followed by the 'fieldwork', a set of exercises to practice in class. Usually it encompasses 5-6 tasks to be fulfilled gradually. The first question arising is what information should Christian educators possess? First and foremost pastors look for 3 competencies in their teaching ministries: 1. Instructors know well how to study the Bible. 2. Teachers should be masters in teaching the Bible effectively. 3. They are responsible for ministering in the Christ's name. Thus, the primary question for the tutors to ask themselves is what knowledge they ought to possess to reach the goal. The other two points concern the scope of information (the content) and the methodology (techniques).

In this study Donald Griggs sets out thirteen points for educators to be aware of and guided by in their teaching ministry. These are the teachers' incentives and role, ten targets or solutions in the curriculum, key concepts, and tutorial goals, instructional and educational activities, information sources, the organizational procedures, various approaches to assess lesson plans, the ability to post queries legibly and ask the right questions, modern interactive

and multi-media techniques usage in class, some tips on fostering student participation, and the teacher training events modeling. According to Griggs (2003) there are definite contents that teachers should know personally. First, instructors should possess two major backgrounds, the biblical one (introduction to the Old Testament and the New Testament), and the theological one (doctrine for the secular), in conjunction with historical and philosophical and psychological foundations. However spiritual, tutors should be aware and apply timely and correctly the basic principles of educational psychology in the process of learning, understand the laws of personal development to be applied to the students, and the scope of the structural and managerial outlooks in the society and the church interaction.

In the author's denomination, the Korean Evangelical Church, the Department of Christian Education issued tutorial materials for the instructors for a period of two years. The subjects listed below may be found in the book as the materials for teachers to know perfectly and present to the students in eight lessons for each semester. The first semester covers the foundation of Christian education, an introduction to the Old Testament, the teaching-learning process, worship and Christian education, a history of Christian education, the theory and practice of story-telling, and a practicum. The second semester covers systematic theology, denominational doctrine and history, evangelism and Christian education, teaching-learning theories, church music and Christian education, the administration of Christian education, the theory and practice of recreation, and a practicum. The third semester covers church history, Christian ethics, the design of the denominational curriculum, educational psychology, the theory and practice of educational evaluation, special educational curricula for the Christian calendar, the theory and practice of the sermon, and a practicum. The fourth semester covers the role of Sunday School teacher, Jesus as the Master Teacher, human relationship dynamic, class management, an understanding of students (Kindergarten, Elementary, Youth), and a practicum.

Christian education is not only completed in the Sunday school classroom through the instruction of intellectual domain or through the dispensing of knowledge and information. The attitudes and behaviors of the teachers in church will affect the students, as well as their behaviors in daily life in general society. Sunday school teachers must live their lives along the lines of what they have taught their students. Sunday school teachers should also have the ability to supervise the educational activities and administration of the Sunday school. If all teachers are capable of supervising instruction, churches will not face the inherent problems that an educational department will face with the loss of teachers or temporary absences. A redundancy of this capability will ensure the continuity of educational programs and proper administration among the teachers in those churches.

Donald Griggs gives a comprehensive and detailed answer, an explanation on what teachers should do specifically. Pastors want teachers to do the practical aspects of what they are doing because they are working in the field of pastoral education. Donald Griggs suggests seven skills that teachers should have such as the ability to build relationships, encourage participation and interaction, plan for teaching with curriculum, develop Bible skills, enable creativity, use audio visuals, and nurture faith. Griggs also emphasizes that knowing and preparing of a lesson plan with articulated instructional objectives in teaching is of greater importance. Teachers in Christian churches are not simply providers of instruction, nor are they stimulators for their students to obtain intellectual trivia; rather, they are helpers for students to live for Jesus Christ throughout their lives. In order to accomplish this goal, teachers must grow in their lives, both physically and spiritually. They should be equipped to live up to the ideals of a faithful teacher. With this in mind, they must receive an ongoing system of training.

Bibliography

Donald L. Griggs. Teaching Today's Teachers To Teach. Abingdon Press, 2003.

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