

Preface

This book was written because of the significant current interest in spirituality and reflection that has permeated every segment of American society including the practice of educational leadership. *Genuine School Leadership: Experience, Reflection and Beliefs* combines three of the most important components of educational leadership. In order to be reflective, an educational leader must use experience coupled with beliefs about teaching and leading others. Therefore, the authors define genuine school leadership as the ability to lead based on an individual's experience, his or her own personal beliefs (spiritual in nature), and the reflection of both. The book is divided into four major chapters. Chapter 1 presents a summary of the current notions that surround the beliefs part of genuine school leadership. In this context, indicators of spirituality in American society and culture are identified. The sources of human knowledge including scientific discoveries that impinge on spirituality are explained. The question of God and evil in the world are also treated as background to the implications of beliefs for the practice of educational leadership.

Chapter 2 presents a personal context in which genuine school leadership can be understood. Thus, the various schools of thought in psychology are identified and explained in relation to spirituality. The moral virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance are explained in this chapter along with how human freedom enhances the quest for an authentic spirituality. Finally, the challenges of

adversity, conflict, and suffering that are present in the practice of educational leadership are explored.

Chapter 3 explains how beliefs, experience, and reflection develop within the context of educational leadership. This is particularly addressed in relation to the notion of *vocations*. The authors try to demonstrate how the educational leadership profession can be viewed as a vocation. The concept of the learning community is presented as the milieu within which this vocation is carried out. Finally, the research responsibility of educational leaders is viewed as an ongoing opportunity not only to enhance the learning community but also the reflection of educational leaders.

The final chapter presents a model for the practice of educational leadership from a spiritual perspective that is termed *Transcendental Leadership*. Throughout the book the material is presented in a user-friendly manner through practical examples, case studies, and exercises. The book also includes an annotated bibliography and a significant number of references.