

## **TOWARD AN ASSESSMENT OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY I: UNDERSTANDING OF THE EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY**

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“Toward an Assessment of Christian Educational Ministry” is a three-part presentation geared primarily to inform pastors and Christian educators regarding process; in turn, the effectiveness of educational ministry in local churches will be reexamined, refocused, and ultimately enhanced. The arrangement of this presentation is as follows: (1) The understanding of evaluation for educational ministry. (2) The development of evaluation tool for educational ministry. (3) Data collection and analysis for educational ministry.

In this section of discussion, the understanding of evaluation for educational ministry will be considered. Generally, “evaluation” has been associated with terms insinuating judgment or criticism. Despite this negative connotation, evaluation, on the other hand, has been accepted as a viable tool for assessing the levels of achievement or accomplishment in academic and organizational settings. Furthermore, on its practical side, evaluation has to do with supervision or monitoring roles among various programs and functions within local church contexts.

In the same manner, in Christian education, evaluation is used to improve the effectiveness as a critical component of fruitful ministry. Dan Sappington and Fred Wilson state, “there is something motivating and affirming about seeing progress in our personal spiritual lives.”<sup>2</sup> However, pastors and Christian educators may be slow to see progress being made in their ministries. Moreover, measuring the growth of individual churches or the accomplishment of their goals still remains as a major difficulty and a challenge for Christian leaders. This study explored the definitions, purposes, functions, models, and issues related to a general understanding of the evaluation process in educational ministry.

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<sup>2</sup>Don Sappington and Fred R. Wilson, “Toward An Assessment of Spiritual Maturity: A Critique of Measurement Tools,” in *Christian Education Journal* 12, no. 3 (1994): 46.

In an attempt to overcome these shortcomings, this study explores the concepts and issues (i.e., the definitions, purposes, functions, models, and issues related to a general understanding of the evaluation process in educational ministry) and suggests practical solutions for application in the educational ministry setting in parts II and III.

## DEFINITIONS OF EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY

The use of and the interpretation of the term “evaluation” in the educational setting have been vague and sometimes equivocal. In an attempt to clarify, a list of the operational definitions of selected terms follows:

*Research:* Evaluation and research are two different professional activities, although the two often are confused. Research is an “investigation or experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, revision of accepted theories in the light of new facts, or practical application of such new or revised theories.”<sup>3</sup>

*Supervision:* Supervision is incorporated with evaluation strategies. Supervision cannot be separated from evaluation. Evaluation, therefore, can contribute to the individual growth of those being supervised. “Supervision, at its worst, is equated with watchdog functions of those above watching over those below. At its best, supervision is seen as an educational process wherein the more experienced colleagues mentor those relatively new to their jobs and support those who are able to function autonomously and desirably.”<sup>4</sup>

*Measurement:* An encyclopedia definition of “assigning a numerical quantity to . . .” will serve in most educational applications.<sup>5</sup> Measurement is included in an assessment or evaluation, but is more to be regarded as a basic research procedure.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>*Merridiam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc. 1996, 995.

<sup>4</sup>H. S. Bhola, *Evaluating “Literacy for Development” Projects, Programs and Campaigns: Evaluation Planning Design and Implementation and Utilization of Evaluation Results* (Hamburg, Germany: German Foundation for International Development, 1990), 11.

<sup>5</sup>Herbert J. Walberg and Geneva D. Haertel, eds., *The International Encyclopedia of Educational Evaluation* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1990), 7.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 8.

*Assessment:* The dictionary definition of “assess” is “to determine the importance, size, or value of something”<sup>7</sup> and implies assessment of material things. However, the educational definition of assessment should, as far as possible, be reserved for application to people. It covers activities included in grading (formal and non-formal), examining, certifying, and so on.<sup>8</sup>

*Evaluation:* In general, it would seem preferable to reserve the term educational evaluation for application to abstract entities such as programs, curricula, and organizational variables. Its use implies a general weighing of the value or worth of something. Just as assessment may be characterized as a routine activity in which most educators will be involved, evaluation is an activity primarily for those engaged in research and development. Its potential importance in the improvement of educational systems has been accorded almost universal recognition, but fierce controversy surrounds the issue of evaluation methods.<sup>9</sup>

## Evaluation

Wychoff describes evaluation as “a process of comparing what is with what ought to be, to locate areas and directions for improvement.”<sup>10</sup> The existing situation is described and analyzed first. Desirable standards are set up in order to appraise the situation. Compare the two. Note the things that are weak, strong, omitted, and overemphasized. From these notations, implications for improvement develop into a plan or strategy for the future, which is the last step.

Coleman stresses that an evaluation process involves three steps.<sup>11</sup> The first step sets up a standard by which to measure. In this step, educators attempt to answer the question, “what ought to be?” The second step analyzes information and data about the present condition to answer the question, “what is?” The third step interprets the information or data according to the standard comparing “what is” to “what ought to be.” Setting up and maintaining high standards are the

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<sup>7</sup>*Merridiam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 69.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 7-8.

<sup>10</sup>D. Campbell Wychoff, *How to Evaluate Your Christian Your Christian Education Program* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), 9.

<sup>11</sup>Lucien E. Coleman, *How to Improve Bible Teaching and Learning in Sunday School* (Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1976), 12.

cornerstone in measuring the activities or programs that need to be evaluated or appraised. The purpose of these three steps is to promote improvement in the Christian educational ministry.

Consider a few other definitions. Egon Guba and Yvonna Lincoln have defined evaluation “as the process of describing the entity evaluated and judging its merit and worth.”<sup>12</sup> In the same vein, Daniel Stufflebeam defined evaluation as “the process of delineating, obtaining, and providing useful information for judging decision alternatives.”<sup>13</sup> Marvin Alkin, on the other hand, describes evaluation as the “process of ascertaining the decision areas of concern, selecting appropriate information, and collecting and analyzing information in order to report summary data useful to decision-makers in selecting among alternatives.”<sup>14</sup> Lee Cronbach defines evaluation simply as “the collection and use of information to make decisions about an educational program.”<sup>15</sup> Meanwhile, George Madaus maintains that we accept the following definition of evaluation: “An evaluation study is one that is designed and conducted to assist some audience to judge and improve the worth of some educational object.”<sup>16</sup>

The author, however, defines evaluation of educational ministry that is a critical component of fruitful ministry as a process to bring improvement in the effectiveness of ministry by measuring the growth of individual churches or the accomplishment of their goals and providing meaningful and practical resolutions.

### **Educational ministry**

Christian education has been misunderstood in many ways. Some with narrow and limited understanding have painted distorted pictures of education aspects in the spectrum of ministry, at best incomplete ones, while others have completely “missed the mark.” The

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<sup>12</sup>Egon G. Guba and Yvonna S. Lincoln, *Effective Evaluation: Improving the Usefulness of Evaluation Results Through Responsive and Naturalistic Approaches* (Jossey-Bass Social and Behavior), (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992), 45.

<sup>13</sup>Daniel L. Stufflebeam, *The Personnel Evaluation Standards: How to Assess System for Evaluating Educators* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992), 45.

<sup>14</sup>Marvin C. Alkin, *A Guide for Evaluation Decision-Makers* (NY: MacMillan, 1986), 134.

<sup>15</sup>Lee J. Cronbach, *Designing Evaluation of Educational and Social Programs* (A Joint Publication in the Jossey-Bass Series in Social and Behavioral Science & in Higher), (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992), 134.

<sup>16</sup>George F. Madaus et al., eds., *Evaluation Models: Viewpoints on Educational and Human Services Evaluation* (Boston, MA: Kluwer Nijhoff, 1983), 44.

problem goes even further. Some seminary students and theologically trained vocational Christian leaders tend directly to equate Christian education to mere educational programs and activities found in Sunday school in a local church. In the worst case, some Christians refer to Christian education as babysitting services provided for the adult congregation during their worship services. One of the widely-known misnomers among typical Korean Christians in Korea is that preaching is reserved for adult congregations whereas Christian education is for children. Thus, it is not uncommon to see pastors tending to devote their time preparing sermons and delegating most of the teaching responsibilities to other staff.

Despite significant development and changes brought about in the landscape of Christian education over the past twenty years, the concepts and the terms pertaining to “educational ministry” still remain relatively foreign to most pastors. Nevertheless, many seminaries and other Christian institutions have undergone changes in their approaches regarding educational ministry. For example, “Christian education” is now referred to as “educational ministry.” This change has helped to prompt pastors and Christian educators to accept church education as an important, integral part of church ministries.

As was seen in Jesus’ earthly ministry, education was one of the most important ministries for Him—the Master teacher (Matt 12:13). Despite the fact that churches have always been teaching institutions, only since the early 1900s have churches identified their formal teaching activities as an educational ministry or program.<sup>17</sup>

In 1954, James Smart was the one who helped introduce the term “teaching ministry” in church contexts. Moreover, “teaching ministry” is a term still most widely used, often interchangeably, with “educational ministry” by pastors and Christian educators in church teaching contexts. However, “educational ministry” is more fitting in a sense that it actually means both “teaching ministry” and “Christian education.” Furthermore, the ministry as a whole needs to include both of the aspects of *teaching* as well as *preaching*. Smart is right when he stated, “The Church must teach, just as it must preach, or it will not be the Church. . . . Teaching belongs to the essence of the Church and a

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<sup>17</sup>Bruce P. Powers, “Educational Ministry of the Church,” in *Christian Education Handbook: A Revised and Completely Updated Edition*, Bruce P. Powers, ed. (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers), 3.

church that neglects this function of teaching has lost something that is indispensable to its nature as a church.”<sup>18</sup>

Based on Ephesians 4:13, Perry Downs sees Christian education as “the ministry of bringing the believer to maturity in Jesus Christ.”<sup>19</sup> Downs maintains that Christian education ought to be a ministry that serves and ministers to others. The focus of educational ministry is to serve the body of Christ by teaching. When Jesus saw the multitude as depicted in Mark 6:34, He had compassion on them because He saw them as sheep without a shepherd. He expressed His compassion by teaching them. Educational ministries require a great deal of energy and consume a large proportion of the resources of the church. Most of the church’s building space is used for teaching, and the largest amount of volunteer help is involved in this aspect of the church ministry.<sup>20</sup>

In evaluating congregational effectiveness, Eugen Roehlkepartain points to the fact that Christian education is the most important vehicle within congregational life for helping people grow in their faith. Christian education has more potential for promoting spiritual growth than any other area of congregational life.<sup>21</sup>

Michael J. Anthony sees the term Christian education ministry in a broader perspective. Christian education ministry is

one of the most exciting forms of service in the kingdom of God. Whether it is serving in a local church, a para-church organization, or on the mission field abroad, people need to hear the message of salvation in Christ and, for those who respond to God’s calling, be built up and strengthened in their faith. Discipleship is at the heart of Christian education, and the process of becoming a disciple is deeply entrenched in the contents of this book.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>James D. Smart, *The Teaching Ministry of the Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954), 11.

<sup>19</sup>Perry G. Downs, *Teaching for Spiritual Growth: An Introduction to Christian Education* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 16.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>21</sup>Eugen Roehlkepartain, *The Teaching Church* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), 19.

<sup>22</sup>Michael J. Anthony, ed., *Foundations of Ministry: An Introduction for a New Generation* (Wheaton: A Bridge Point Book, 1992), 10.

## PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

The design and implementation of evaluation depend upon the specific purposes they are to serve. Evaluations differ according to the type of question being asked, the stage a program is in, whether it is a new or established program, and the type of decision the evaluation is intended to inform.

The three major classes of evaluations are (1) analyses related to the conceptualization and design of educational ministry, (2) monitoring of program implementation, and (3) assessments of impact and efficiency. Studies may focus on any of these three areas; comprehensive evaluations may include all of them.<sup>23</sup>

Impact assessments are undertaken to determine whether a program has its intended effects. Such assessment may be made at any stage of a program, from pre-implementation policy making through planning, design, and implementation. Underlying all impact assessments is the model of the randomized experiment, the most powerful research design for establishing causality.<sup>24</sup>

Then, the purposes of evaluation of educational ministry are (1) to give guidelines to improve educational ministry, (2) to find efficiency, and (3) to grow through evaluation.

Johnson identifies ten other purposes of evaluation:

1. Evaluation should serve to provide a comprehensive view of the educational ministry.
2. Evaluation should assess the consistency of the program with the educational philosophy of the church.
3. Evaluation should provide a chance for a cooperative effort by everyone involved.
4. Evaluation should serve the church continuously as a part of the planning and implementing process.
5. Evaluation should highlight quality and growth.
6. Evaluation should provide a serious look at teachers/leaders, learners, and the learning process.

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<sup>23</sup>Peter H. Rossi and Howard E. Freeman, *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach 5* (Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications, 1993), 54-55.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 258-59.

7. Evaluation should identify strengths and feed this information into the total planning process for inclusion when expanded ministries are considered.
8. Evaluation should identify problems and focus upon them with a view toward proper solution.
9. Evaluation should help clarify good objectives and point out weaknesses in poor ones.
10. Evaluation should provide accurate and relevant information.<sup>25</sup>

## FUNCTIONS OF EVALUATION

Functions of evaluation go beyond its typically stated objectives. Its objectives generally are informational; but its functions are, at the same time, professional, social-psychological, political, and historical.<sup>26</sup>

*Informational:* The informational functions of evaluation are quite obvious. These are to provide feedback and to collect usable information—information that can be utilized to improve on-going programs and to change their directions and to find the obstacles for their educational ministry.

*Professional:* The professional functions of evaluation are to increase understanding of the means and ends of educational ministry; to demonstrate the effectiveness or failure of plans and strategies in use; and to suggest corrective directions. It is important to note that evaluations are conducted not merely to find faults with educational ministry, but also to demonstrate its strengths and goodness in the positive side.<sup>27</sup>

*Organizational:* Evaluation fulfills important organizational functions. At its best, it helps churches to undertake organizational renewal by forcing an examination of goals and purposes, reducing bureaucratic complacency, and clarifying desirable and better operational procedures buried under day-to-day routines.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Bob I. Johnson, "How to Plan and Evaluate," in *Christian Education Handbook*, ed. Bruce P. Powers (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1981), 60.

<sup>26</sup>Bhola, 22-23.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 22.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 23.



*Political:* The political functions of evaluation include agenda setting and generation debate on important issues. It promotes accountability and can promote congregational participation. On the one hand, evaluation can legitimize an on-going program; and, on the other hand, it can look for scapegoats to fix blame and can kill a program which strategic actors may have decided to terminate in the first place.<sup>29</sup>

*Social-psychological:* The social-psychological functions of evaluation may consist of pacification and mystification—to give participants a feeling of accomplishment, by reducing complex social problems to a choice between relatively simple alternatives. In its more positive aspects, it can promote conflict resolution and arbitration.<sup>30</sup>

*Historical:* Evaluation also has important historical functions, such as recording and documenting actions, events, and results that otherwise might be lost to collective memory. Many churches have failed to keep the records of their historical work and outcomes.<sup>31</sup>

## MODELS OF EVALUATION

Formally, a model is information, data, or principles grouped, verbally or graphically, to represent or describe a certain thing, idea, condition, or phenomenon.<sup>32</sup> There are many different evaluation models. Different specialists have undergone somewhat different experiences in learning and evaluating and have used different values and worldviews in reflecting their experiences.

Evaluation models are different also because evaluation specialists have introduced additional “value” considerations to their initial choices of paradigms. Some evaluation models emphasize a more synoptic view of evaluation, suggesting that we evaluate not only the behavior of our so-called clients but also our own. Some evaluation models suggest the introduction of imagination to our evaluation so that we do not depend only on cold calculation, while others suggest that the unanticipated consequences of program actions may be as important as the intended and the anticipated. Therefore, the model of evaluation should be able to accommodate both the anticipated and the

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 22.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 23.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 27.

unanticipated consequences. Some suggest that evaluation be conducted as an advocacy and confrontation, whereas others recommend participation evaluation wherein both the means and ends of evaluation are participatively determined by all concerned — organizers, professionals, and beneficiaries.<sup>33</sup>

On this issue, Bhola introduces fourteen models of evaluation.<sup>34</sup>

1. Tyler's objective-oriented model: This model is associated with the name of Ralph Tyler and is perhaps the oldest of the available evaluation models.

2. Social experimentation model: This is a model that seeks to experiment with already existing social groups.

3. CIPP model and the EIPOL grid: The Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) model is often associated with the name of Daniel L. Stufflebeam, who has used this model in various evaluation studies.<sup>35</sup>

4. Countenance of evaluation: The countenance of evaluation model is associated with the name of Robert E. Stake. This model directly relates to the evaluation of effects in terms of stated objectives and involves the completion of two data matrices.

5. Responsive evaluation: Subsequently, Stake has moved to the concept of Responsive Evaluation—an evaluation mode that comes closer to transactional and naturalistic evaluations. It is not pre-ordinate (that is, already defined by the evaluator as a specialist) but is responsive to real needs of audiences requesting information.

6. Discrepancy evaluation model: This model was proposed by Malcolm Provus, who defined evaluation as the art of describing a discrepancy between expectation and performance of a program. The basic tenets of the model are standards (S), performance (P), and discrepancy (D). The task is to compare P against S to determine D and thereby to make judgments about the worth or adequacy of an object. The model further suggests that we look for discrepancies in terms of five different aspects of a program: (a) the design of the program, (b)

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 35.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 36.

<sup>35</sup>He sees four types of evaluation: (1) Context evaluation—to provide information on the setting, to be able to make planning decisions. (2) Input evaluation—to make programming decisions such as alternative project designs and personnel decisions. (3) Process evaluation—to make decisions related to methodologies and implementation. (4) Product evaluation—to evaluate impact and to make recycling decisions.

its installation, (c) the processes of implementation, (d) the product, and (e) the cost.

7. Transactional evaluation: The transactional evaluation model is rooted in transactional psychology, which considers perception and knowing as a transactional process. This transactional process deals with concrete individuals, within concrete settings; and the evaluator, as viewer, is always part of the set of transactions.

8. Goal-free evaluation: “The idea of goal-free evaluation was introduced by Michael Scriven. He pointed out that in the emphasis on stated goals, the search had become completely focused on intended effects—effects the evaluator wanted to create under accepted program goals. This focus became so exclusive that the evaluator often developed tunnel vision: looking for evidence of intended effects and seeing nothing else.”<sup>36</sup>

9. Investigative approaches to evaluation: Jack D. Douglas<sup>37</sup> has analyzed the methods of the investigator or the detective to show how investigative strategies could be used to expose the truth about people in social settings. The investigative model does not assume a world of cooperation, openness, and truthfulness, but one of misinformation, evasions, lies, and fronts. He then suggests strategies for grasping an evaluation setting, infiltrating the setting, building friendly and trusting relationships, and then using them in a continuous process of testing out and checking out.

10. Evaluation as illumination: This model was developed in clear rejection of the “agricultural botany” model of evaluation rooted in the scientific paradigm. It was asserted that groups and communities cannot be randomly assigned to treatments like farms and fields and that human beings cannot be administered treatments like seeds in the ground. In any case, quantitative data generated by the agricultural-botany model provided only partial descriptions of phenomena.

11. Evaluation as connoisseurship: The connoisseurship model of evaluation, proposed by Elliot Eisner,<sup>38</sup> makes a clean break with the scientific paradigm and draws from the aesthetic tradition of the arts.

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 40.

<sup>37</sup>See Jack D. Douglas, *Studies in Transactional Evaluation* (Berkeley, CA: McCutchan, 1973).

<sup>38</sup>See Elliott W. Eisner, *Educational Imagination: The Design and Evaluation of School Programs* (New York: MacMillan, 1979).

12. Advocacy model of evaluation: Advocacy model is also called the adversary evaluation model or the judicial evaluation model. As the name suggests, this model uses quasi-judicial procedures in the conduct of evaluation. Typically, two groups of people both for and against a program are allowed to advocate their opposite positions before an educational jury in terms of issues generated and selected for the trial.

13. Participatory evaluation model: Participatory research or evaluation is not a scientific endeavor of the professionals, but an in-depth, existential review of an experience done by all concerned, together, in collaboration. The learner becomes an evaluator and the evaluator becomes a learner. Evaluation goals, ends, standards, and tools are decided upon participatively.

14. The situation-specific strategy (3-S) model of evaluation: The 3-S model promotes thought about what strategies to choose in specific real-life situations, about how to do “the second best” when the very best is not possible. The conceptual essence of the 3-S model is this: (1) Do not start with an evaluation model; begin with the evaluation problem. (2) Analyze the evaluation problem into sub-problems; think how the problem or parts of the problem might unfold over time; and, finally, think of the milieu in which evaluation will be conducted.<sup>39</sup>

## **ISSUES OF EVALUATION**

An evaluation process of educational ministry is multi-faceted. That is, an appropriate appraisal of the programs and functions of a local autonomy involves the successful consolidation and resolution of different issues such as the planning of an evaluation, the methods of evaluation, the nature of church, the criteria of functionality, evaluator, sponsor of evaluation, and the validity of evaluation. However, in this portion of the discussion, two major issues involved in evaluation will be examined.

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<sup>39</sup>Bhola, 36.

## **The Nature of Church**

The evaluation process must be able to accommodate the uniqueness of a church or programs to be evaluated: for example, the size and the location of church, the characteristics of memberships, and other distinct features.

An issue of selecting desirable standards to be applied in the appraisal becomes a salient factor in the evaluation process. For instance, legitimate concerns can be addressed in an issue involving church size: “What would be an appropriate standard that needs to be applied in determining the effectiveness of educational ministry of a relatively small church? Should our church (small size) adopt the standards of the church on the next street (a large church) because they seemingly are doing well?” Obviously, no one particular set of standards will fit all churches and the varying degrees of different circumstances. Schaller indicates that approximately sixty percent of churches in the United States are considered small churches with less than 50 members; thirty percent make up mid-size churches with the number of members ranging from 100 to 175. Hence, those pastors who minister in those small churches would see evaluation of educational ministry differently from that of large churches.<sup>40</sup>

### **Evaluator: Sponsor or Initiator of Evaluation<sup>41</sup>**

Generally, an evaluation has a sponsor. This is the individual or organization that requests the evaluation and usually pays for it. Evaluations have a variety of stakeholders or audiences—groups of people who have direct or indirect interest in the findings. Depending on evaluators, evaluation itself can be successful or unsuccessful. In some evaluations, the roles of evaluator, sponsor, stakeholder, and user are all played by the same people. If staff or managers decide to evaluate their own programs they will be the sponsors, the primary users, and the evaluators—and one of several groups of potential stakeholders.

Patton distinguishes the successful and unsuccessful roles of

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<sup>40</sup>Lyle E. Schaller, *Looking in the Mirror: Self-Appraisal in the Local Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1984), 13-37.

<sup>41</sup>Joan L. Herman, Lynn L. Morris, and Carol T. Fitz-Gibbon, *Evaluator's Handbook* (Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications, 1987), 8.

internal evaluators<sup>42</sup> To be successful in evaluation, it must be Management consultant, Decision support, Management information resource, Systems generalist, Expert troubleshooter, Advocate for/champion of evaluation use, Systematic planner. By contrast, if the evaluator is seen as a spy and hatchet carrier, it will become unsuccessful.

In conclusion, ministry means different things to different people; and, thus, there are as many definitions as there are varied ministries. Furthermore, confusion is compounded due to vast differences as to how ministry is carried out and other ministry factors —church size, denominational affiliation, church traditions, and the unique characteristics of the individual church (i.e., homogeneity of members and pastoral leadership styles).

## CONCLUSION

Ministry means different things to different people; and, thus, there are as many definitions as there are varied ministries. The vast differences on how ministries are carried out and other ministry factors (i.e., church size, denominational affiliation, church traditions, and the unique characteristics of the church) cause pastors and other Christian leaders to cling to a survival mode of situational and temporal leadership situations without a blueprint for ministry. An honest, “down to earth” kind of reassessment of the ministry is neither an option nor a luxury. It is the mandate for a fruitful ministry. John 15 serves as a vivid reminder that the Father is serious about fruit in our lives.

Nonetheless, in this first article of this presentation of "Toward an Assessment of Christian Educational Ministry," the author's intention was to provide a meaningful way to grapple with the foundational concepts involving the evaluation of educational ministry for pastors and Christian educators. The author, thus, explored the definitions (i.e., related terms such as research, supervision, measurement, assessment, and evaluation), purposes, functions, models, and issues related to a general understanding of the evaluation process in educational ministry. By clarifying the operational definitions of selected terms, the author identified the purposes of evaluation in educational ministry: (1) to give guidelines to improving educational

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<sup>42</sup>Michael Quinn Patton, *Utilization Focused Evaluation: The Next Century Text*, 3d ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 1997), 142.

ministry, (2) to find efficiency, and (3) to grow through evaluation. The author, furthermore, included a definition of evaluation of educational ministry as a critical component of fruitful ministry that is a process for bringing about improvement in the effectiveness of ministry. This improvement is brought about through measurement of the growth of individual churches, or the accomplishment of their goals, and providing meaningful and practical resolutions.

Educational ministry programs, however, involve dynamic interchanges among many groups and persons within the church, requiring further investigation in the areas of (1) developing evaluation tools, (2) guidelines for planning an evaluation, and (3) methods of evaluation and the ongoing investment utilizing available resources.

A succeeding article, as a second part of "Toward an Assessment of Christian Educational Ministry," would primarily investigate issues related to the Development of Evaluation in Educational Ministry. The critical components of the developmental aspects of an evaluation process would include educational goal, purpose, and objectives; pastoral guidelines; short term and long term; leadership, position, and job description; facilities; administration and organization; teacher (recruit, training, and installation); curriculum (its selection, usage, and feedback); departmentalization (children, youth, adult, and family); management (registration, attendance, and records); evangelism/mission education; and others.

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