
c. jeff woods

user friendly evaluation

improving the User Friendly Evaluation: Improving the Work of Pastors, Programs, and Laity work of pastors, programs and Laity

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CONTENTS

[Acknowledgments](#)

User Friendly Evaluation: Improving the Work of Pastors, Programs, and Laity

[Introduction](#)

[1. What is evaluation?](#)

[2. Called to Be Different](#)

[3. Techniques of Evaluation](#)

[4. A Fill-in-the-Blank Evaluation](#)

[5. Evaluation and Church Renewal](#)

[6. Evaluation and Lay Ministry](#)

[7. Evaluation and Pastoral Ministry](#)

[8. The Experts Respond to Dilemmas](#)

[9. Who are we when we are not doing anything?](#)

[Appendix A](#)

[Church Distinctiveness Survey](#)

[Appendix B](#)

[Church Renewal Diagnosis Instrument](#)

[Appendix C](#)

[Annual Ministry Goals for Rev. C. Jeff Woods](#)

[Notes](#)

[Bibliography](#)

A Road Map for Readers Needing Immediate Help

For help in:

- ~~formulating a broader base than numbers from which to evaluate church growth,~~ ~~turn to chapter 2.~~
- ~~surveying your membership, User Friendly Evaluation: Improving the Work of Pastors, Programs, and Laity~~ turn to chapter 3.
- ~~evaluating a specific program, turn to chapters 3 and 4.~~
- ~~assessing your current strengths and weaknesses in church renewal, turn to chapter 5.~~
- ~~evaluating the ministry of the laity in the workplace, church, or community, turn to chapter 6.~~
- ~~evaluating a pastor or church staff member, turn to chapter 7.~~
- ~~deciding whether or not to enlist the help of a church consultant, turn to chapter 8.~~
- ~~encouraging a long-time volunteer to move on to a different ministry, turn to chapter 8.~~
- ~~deciding whether or not to add a second worship service, turn to chapter 8.~~
- ~~evaluating a preaching ministry, turn to chapter 8.~~

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INTRODUCTION

“Rev. Thomas, over the past several months, the board of worship has tackled several different worship issues. We have involved more people, created more variety in our music, and enhanced the meaning of the ordinances. For our next topic, we would like to discuss the possibility of a sermon evaluation procedure.”

Sermon evaluation?! Panic. No, it's stronger than that. Terror. That's closer. Discombobulation. Still closer. It's like sending Daniel to the lion's den all over again. No, it's worse than even that. The members of the board of worship mean well, but their critical evaluation skills are second to no other board; I would feel like a lion in a den of Daniels!

After several more seconds of anticipatory grief, Rev. Thomas begins to think a bit more rationally. *Maybe the board of worship means well. Could it be that they really want to help? I'm sure every pastor's sermons could improve, User Friendly Evaluation: Improving the Work of Pastors, Programs, and Laity including mine. After all, the entire congregation probably evaluates my sermon every Sunday anyway, although User Friendly Evaluation: Improving the Work of Pastors, Programs, and Laity covertly. If they just wouldn't compare my sermons to ones they hear at our annual conferences or to people on TV. I would certainly need to have input into the process myself. The thought still petrifies me, but maybe something good could actually come from this suggestion.*

The word *evaluation* gives rise to many disturbing thoughts: *judgment, error, performance*. The words triggered by *evaluation* can cause people to respond negatively or defensively to whatever else is said about evaluation. People view evaluation as a necessary evil. Even though many people are beginning to see the benefits of an evaluation process, most are still uneasy when the word is spoken.

A User Friendly Book

This is a user friendly book about evaluation. First of all, it is user friendly because no terms or procedures will be introduced that presume the reader has taken foundational statistical and measurement classes. The examples, illustrations, and User Friendly Evaluation: Improving the Work of Pastors, Programs, and Laity exercises represent tasks that a church leader, with little or no background in evaluation, can conduct. I have not assumed that a local church leader can order and evaluate census track-data for the church neighborhood. Even when technical concepts such as this are alluded to, the reader will be directed to published references and available resources.

Second, it is user friendly because it approaches evaluation from the premise that all evaluation procedures should be adapted to the individual or group using them. Each pastor and congregation is called to be different from all others. This concept makes evaluation user friendly by showing that comparisons among congregations are irrelevant. Each congregation must evaluate itself in light of its own mix of gifts, background, talents, and opportunities—its own potential.

Third, the book is user friendly by its practical nature. While I believe that all praxes should be guided by good, sound theory, no theory will be presented that cannot be tried and tested or used as a guiding principle by the reader. The book is practical, but it also teaches the reader about the field of evaluation, detailing principles of evaluation that can be applied to contexts User Friendly Evaluation: Improving the Work of Pastors, Programs, and Laity not contained in the book.

Finally, it is indeed a friendly book. Although evaluation can be scary, this book will constantly lift up the friendly and helpful side of evaluation.

Overview of Book

The first chapter of the book provides background information regarding the field of evaluation. Many evaluators may not realize that evaluation is a field of study. In this chapter, I User Friendly Evaluation: Improving the Work of Pastors, Programs, and Laity will explain the progression of evaluation models, touching on authors such as Tyler, Stufflebeam, Stake, User Friendly Evaluation: Improving the Work of Pastors, Programs, and Laity Scriven, and Guba. Different evaluation experts have attempted to organize their evaluation procedures around different issues, finally arriving at the postulate that every evaluation procedure should be “responsive” to the specific organization.

This concept of responsive evaluation gives rise to chapter 2, which discusses the many ways congregations might differ. This chapter also provides some tools for each congregation to discover its own uniqueness.

Chapter 3 will detail techniques of evaluation subdivided into four categories. (1)

Congregational qualitative assessment includes techniques such as interviewing, building a church's saga, and small-group interactions. (2) Congregational quantitative assessment includes "ten great three-by-five-card surveys," pencil and paper surveying, and methods of analyzing the data obtained. (3) The category "gathering easy data" includes a look at finances, mission giving, and organizational charts. (4) "Gathering data with a little more effort" looks at demographics and "evaluating by walking about in the neighborhood."

Chapter 4 User Friendly Evaluation: Improving the Work of Pastors, Programs, and Laity guides the reader through an evaluation procedure. I ask the reader to choose a program or event to evaluate prior to reading the chapter. Can you describe the difference between merit and worth? Do you know the difference between formative and summative evaluation? If not, you need to read chapter 4, designed to compel the reader to analyze the background, the results, the side effects, and the tradeoffs User Friendly Evaluation: Improving the Work of Pastors, Programs, and Laity related to the program or event chosen.

Chapters 5 through 7 relate evaluation to church renewal, lay ministry, and pastoral ministry, respectively. Chapter 5 presents a holistic philosophy of church renewal, including a self-scoring diagnostic tool for evaluating a congregation's strongest and weakest paths to renewal. Chapter 6 details three distinct types of lay ministry: (1) ministry to User Friendly Evaluation: Improving the Work of Pastors, Programs, and Laity members, (2) community ministry, and (3) on-the-job ministry. I also suggest methods for assessing the three types. Chapter 7, on pastoral ministry, will reveal the link between pastoral strengths and congregational strengths and User Friendly Evaluation: Improving the Work of Pastors, Programs, and Laity suggest activities such as annual goal setting, long-range planning, and planned continuing education for professional church leaders.

Chapter 8 gives information from three experts in the field of congregational User Friendly Evaluation: Improving the Work of Pastors, Programs, and Laity evaluation, asking them to respond to four dilemmas in the field of church evaluation. It is also the reader's opportunity to begin wrestling with the book's insights and information.

Chapter 9 asks the question, "Who are we when we are not doing anything?" This chapter looks at the times in the life of a congregation when the corporate body is not gathered together. Here I encourage the reader to begin developing an "evaluator's eye" in assessing the subtle User Friendly Evaluation: Improving the Work of Pastors, Programs, and Laity messages sent by a church through written communication, informal conversations, User Friendly Evaluation: Improving the Work of Pastors, Programs, and Laity responses to requests, and the social grapevine.

It is not necessary to read the chapters in order. Someone with a severe pain in the abdomen should not be forced to endure an entire physical examination prior to receiving relief from that pain. If you purchased this book for immediate help with a specific situation, refer to the map at the end of the table of contents for directions on where to find prompt assistance for your predicament.

User Friendly Evaluation User Friendly Evaluation: Improving the Work of Pastors, Programs, and Laity Improving The Work Of Pastors Programs And Laity

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