

# Theological Foundations for Evaluation

“Evaluation is one of God’s ways of bringing the history of the past into dialogue with the hope of the future.... We are called into new growth and new ministries by taking a realistic and hopeful look at what we have been and what we can still become.”

— *Theological and Theoretical Foundations for Evaluating Ministry*, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, 1990

## Scripture

**The wisdom of the Hebrew Scriptures offers foundations for evaluation.**

- “Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom for the future.” (Proverbs 19:20)

**Jesus invited evaluation of his ministry.**

- “He asked them, ‘Who do you say I am?’” (Mk 8:27-29; also Mt 16:13-23; Lk 9:18-22)

**The Bible calls us to grow toward “perfection.”**

- Jesus challenged listeners to “Be perfect ... as [God] is perfect.” (Mt 5:48)
- From Paul: “Not that I have...already been made perfect, but I press on....” (Phil. 3:12)
- Also from Paul: “Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith...that you may become perfect.” (II Cor. 13: 5, 9)

**Truthful, loving communication can result in growth.**

- “But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into...Christ.” (Eph. 4:15)

## Wesleyan Heritage

**“Going on to perfection” is a familiar theme in Wesley’s sermons and writings.**

- *Growth and development* are essential not only to human existence but also to faith.
- *Faith as a lifelong process* — a continual journey of growing into salvation. (I Peter 2:2)

**Class Meetings are foundational to the early Methodist Movement.**

- Class meeting as a time for *reflecting on one’s faith journey*
- Class meeting as a loving, supportive, and nurturing environment in which *to evaluate one’s growth in faith*
- Class meeting questions designed to encourage *giving and receiving honest feedback*

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