BIBLICAL BASIS FOR MISSION-EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION

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WHAT IS EVALUATION?

According to business dictionary,

evaluation is a "rigorous analysis of completed or ongoing activities that determine or support management accountability, effectiveness, and efficiency.

http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/evaluation.html

WHAT IS EVALUATION?

According to Merriam Webster dictionary,

to evaluate is

- **to determine or fix the value of (***someone or something***) or**

- **to determine the significance, worth, or condition of (***someone or something***) usually by careful appraisal and study**

http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/evaluation.html

WHY DO WE OFTEN RESIST EVALUATION IN OUR CHURCH WORK?

- **We perceive it as a threat** to our self-esteem and even reputation. We take it personally as an attack that will destroy our good image and everything we have done.

- **We connect it with the school experience,** where grades were not always objective but put us in one or another box with a label of loser or winner. And we don't want to be losers.

WHY DO WE OFTEN RESIST EVALUATION IN OUR CHURCH WORK?

- **We connect it with judgment**, and naturally we don't want to be judged. We are afraid that we will hear the words that king Belshazzar saw on the wall:

"You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting" (Dan. 5:27)

And we are afraid that next phrase will be:

Your kingdom is divided and given to others … (Dan. 5:28)

WHY DO WE OFTEN RESIST EVALUATION IN OUR CHURCH WORK?

- We had limited experience with evaluation that resulted in positive outcome

- We are uncertain how evaluation will be done

- We are also not comfortable to expose our weaknesses

- We are tired of the reports

- And we perceive it rather as a secular tool than a biblical approach.

LEGITIMATE QUESTIONS

- **Are there any ideas of evaluation in the Bible?**

- **Does God want His church to evaluate its decisions, strategies, and activities?**

- **Should mission-effectiveness evaluation become a necessary part of church life and ministry?**

I. BASIC BIBLICAL CONCEPTS FOR EVALUATION

A. Concept of Good Stewardship and Appraisal

B. Concept of Continual Growth and Bearing the Good Fruit

C. Concept of Accountability

A. CONCEPT OF GOOD STEWARDSHIP AND APPRAISAL. SOME BIBLICAL EXAMPLES:

- God as a Master and Good Steward of the universe – His first appraisals we find in the account of creation: after each day God gave a summative appraisal: all things He created were good and at the end of creation week the report of His evaluation was: "*It was very good*" (Gen. 1, 31).

- Adam and Eve as God's appointed stewards of the garden of Eden and the whole earth (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15).

- Shepherd and the flock, including image of the good Shepherd, unfaithful shepherds of Israel, a parable of the lost sheep (Ps. 23; Ezek. 34; Luke 15:1-7).

- The Master and two (faithful and unfaithful) servants (Matt. 24:45-51).

- A story of a tower builder and his calculations before building project (Luke 14:28-29).

- A parable of the talents—three servants (Matt. 25:14-30).

WHO ARE GOOD STEWARDS OR GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANTS?

- They are those who are wise enough to do regular appraisals, have investment, and increase.

- Such good stewards will hear the words of the Master:

"Well done, you good and faithful servant!' said his master. 'You have been faithful in managing small amounts, so I will put you in charge of large amounts. Come on in and share my happiness!'" (Matthew 25:21).

B. CONCEPT OF CONTINUAL GROWTH & BEARING THE GOOD FRUIT.
SOME BIBLICAL EXAMPLES:

- Jesus in His childhood who grew *"both in body and in wisdom, gaining favor with God and men"* (Luke 2:52);

- A call of apostle Paul to us that *"… we must grow up in every way to Christ, who is the head"* (Eph. 4:15). *"we shall become mature people, reaching to the very height of Christ's full stature."* (Eph. 4:13). And bear the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-26).

- **The parable of the unfruitful fig-tree gives us Jesus' opinion on the situation when there is no fruit (Luke 13:6-9; Mk. 11:20).**

- **Apostle Paul evaluation of the spiritual condition or growth of some believers:** *"Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready"* **(1 Cor. 3:1-2).**

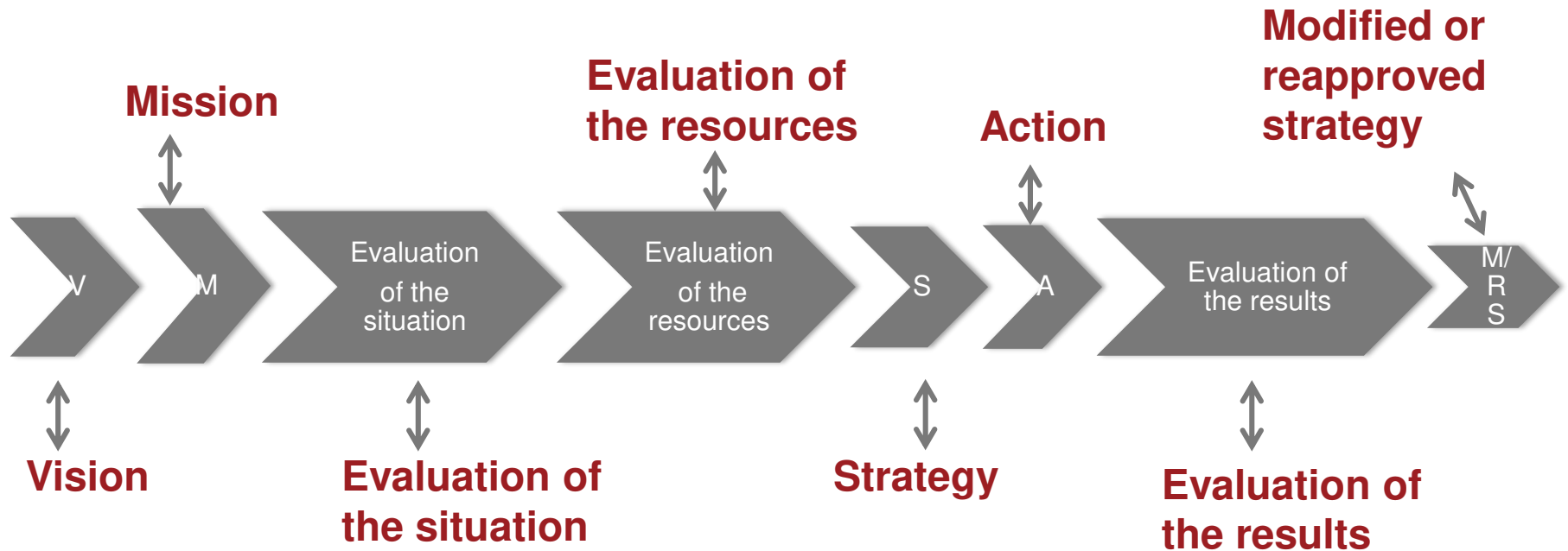# C. CONCEPT OF ACCOUNTABILITY. SOME BIBLICAL EXAMPLES:

- **God's questions to Adam and Eve: "Where are you?""What is this you have done?" (Gen. 3: 8-13).**

- **God's question to Cain: "Where is your brother Abel?" "What have you done?" (Gen. 4:9-10).**

- **A parable of the talents (Mt. 25:14-30): "..the master returned and settled accounts with them" (Mt. 25:19). "you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest" (Mt. 25:27).**

- Reports of Jesus' disciples after their missionary journey: *"The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught"* (Mk. 6:30).

- Accountability on the day of judgment: *"God is going to judge everything we do, whether good or bad, even things done in secret"* (Eccl 12:14). *"And all were judged according to what they had done"* (Rev 20:13). Interesting idea is that in the OT those who did not want to be punished on the day of final judgment had to be regularly reconciled with God on the Day of Atonement – idea of regular evaluation.
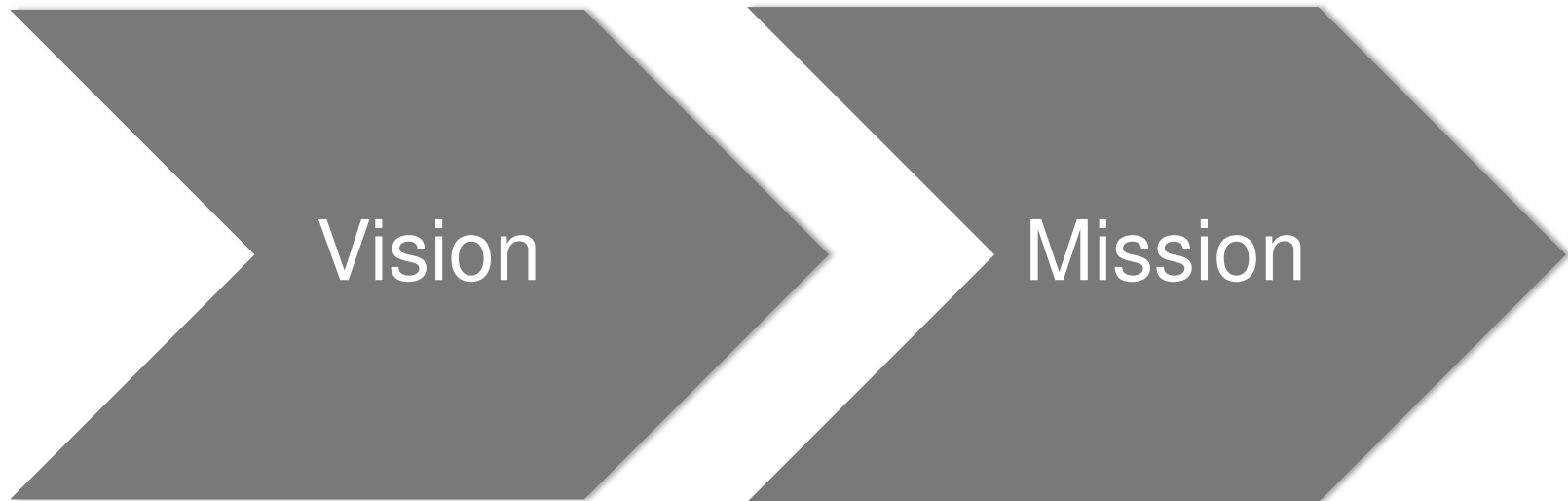
II. MISSION-EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION FROM BIBLICAL POINT OF VIEW

Mission-effectiveness evaluation should not be viewed as a separate exercise after the mission is done but rather as a necessary component of different links in mission initiatives.

THE CHAIN OF MISSION ENTERPRISE SHOULD INCLUDE:

Mission

Evaluation of the resources

Action

Modified or reapproved strategy

V — M — Evaluation of the situation — Evaluation of the resources — S — A — Evaluation of the results — M/R/S

Vision

Evaluation of the situation

Strategy

Evaluation of the results

THE CHAIN OF MISSION ENTERPRISE SHOULD START WITH:

Vision

Mission

THE CHAIN OF MISSION ENTERPRISE SHOULD INCLUDE:

Vision → Mission → Evaluation of the situation

EVALUATION OF THE SITUATION.
BIBLICAL EXAMPLES:

- 12 spies who went to Jericho: *"Go, look over the land," he said, "especially Jericho"* (Joshua 2:1).

- God sent Gideon to the camp of enemies at night to see and to listen (Judges 7:9-10).

- Joshua sent people to spy out the region around Ai (Joshua 7:2).

- Nehemiah went out at night to inspect the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 3).
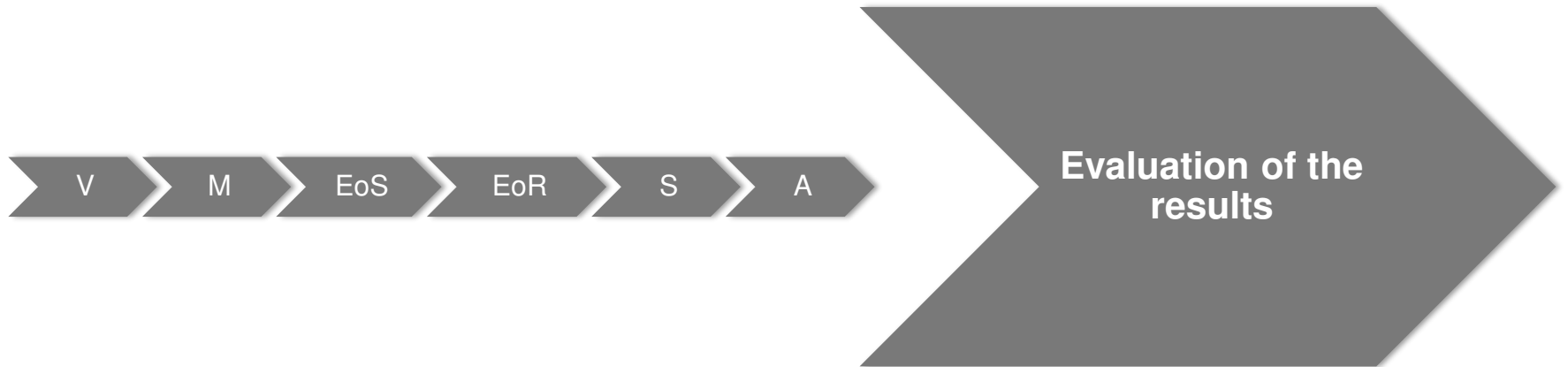
THE CHAIN OF MISSION ENTERPRISE SHOULD INCLUDE:

Vision → Mission → Evaluation of the situation → Evaluation of the resources

EVALUATION OF THE RESOURCES.
BIBLICAL EXAMPLES:

- God asked Moses from the burning bush: *"What do you have in your hand?"* (Ex. 4:2).

- Jesus asked the disciples facing the hungry crowd over 5,000 people: *"How many loaves do you have? .. Go and see"* (Mk. 6:38).

- Question of the prophet Elisha to a widow: *"What do you have in your house?"* (2 Kings 4:2);

- God's order to count people of Israel (Num. 1:1-3; 3:40; 4:1) and His advices to Gideon to count and limit his unit (Judges 7:1-7).

- The same concept of resource evaluation we meet in the description of the church as a Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-31; Eph. 1:23; 4:11-13).

THE CHAIN OF MISSION ENTERPRISE SHOULD INCLUDE:

V ▸ M ▸ EoS ▸ EoR ▸ S ▸ A ▸ **Evaluation of the results**

EVALUATION OF THE RESULTS. SOME BIBLICAL EXAMPLES:

- Disciples' report to Jesus after their missionary trips (Mk. 6:30).

- Reports of 72 disciples (Luke 10:17).

- Four kinds of soil & the results (Mk. 4)

- Disciples and the boy with the evil spirit: *"Why could not we drive it out?"* (Mk. 9:28).

- Evaluation of the results of their current strategy of member care by the apostles in Acts 6.

- Peter's report of the baptism by the Holy Spirit of Cornelius' household (Acts 10-11).

- Jesus' evaluation of the seven churches of the first century (Rev. 2: 3).

The evaluation of the results should be also done in view of the vision and mission formulated or received – if we don't want to repeat the example of 10 unbelieving spies

In our strategy of reaching the cities we need to check our vision, mission, evaluation of the situation, resources, results against

vision and mission of God

WHAT IS JESUS' VISION?

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb" (Rev. 7:9-10).
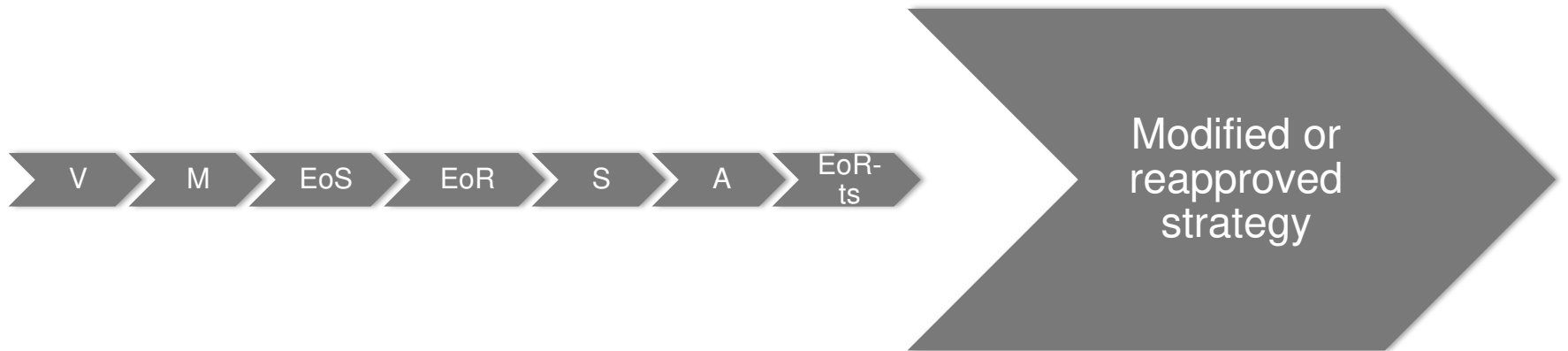
WHAT IS OUR MISSION?

"Go and make disciples of all nations…" (Mt. 28:19-20) Why? –

To reach this final goal or vision of Jesus.

We have to be sure that our urban strategies alongside with other goals include reaching of different ethnic groups and minorities through Centers of influence in the cities.

THE CHAIN OF MISSION ENTERPRISE SHOULD INCLUDE:

MODIFIED STRATEGY. SOME BIBLICAL EXAMPLES:

- **Recommitment, modified strategy, and victory over town Ai (Joshua 7; 8).**

- **Jerusalem council in relation to the new converts from gentiles – modified approach to the gentiles (Acts 15).**

- **Letters to the 7 churches from Revelation of Jesus (Rev. 2; 3) – great need of changes.**

IN CONCLUSION:

- **God expects us to move forward with His vision and mission in mind**

- **God expects us to be effective in our mission not because we have enough resource or situation is favorable. It could be quite the opposite.**

- **According to biblical examples, the challenge was always greater than were the resources of God's people. But for God it is not the main point.**

- **The main point is our commitment to the task and to the moving forward in accord with His will and direction.**

Today, as many centuries ago, God is asking us:

"What is in your hand?"

We need to go forward with the resources we have and be faithful servants in each step of the strategy, and He will multiply our resources when we bring them to Him and the victory will be given to us

"Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty" (Zech. 4:6).

"God will work for us when we are ready to do what we can and should do on our part."

(EGW, *Sothern Watchman*, March 15, 1904)