3 Kinds of Results in Church Leadership

Instead of counting Christians, we need to weigh them. – Dallas Willard

Clear vision requires clarity about the results you are after. Any result you might desire for your ministry will fit into three broad categories - **input results, output results and impact results.**

INPUT RESULTS

Input results in the church world focus on the number of people and dollars that "come into" the church. Input results are important. You don't have a church without them. It's also important to measure input results. You can't lead well without knowing them.

Common ways we talk about input results include the "ABC's" (attendance, buildings and cash) or "nickels and noses" or "butts and bucks" Every week, thousands of churches across the land will print their input results on a worship bulletin or review them in the next elders meeting. **Input results inform the functional dashboard of the American church.**

OUTPUT RESULTS

Output results refer to actual life-change outcomes that God intends for followers of Christ individually and together. Examples of output results include the quality of a believer's prayer life, the skillfulness in sharing the gospel, or the development of patience as one of the fruits of the Spirit.

There are hundreds of biblical phrases and concepts to capture the wonder of gospel-centered output results. From terms like "spiritual formation" and "transformed living," to "Christlikeness," and "full devotion to Christ." **I have never met a church without some banner, slogan or mission that points to output results. Output language shapes the primary intent of all the pastors I have ever met. Yet while output results shape intent, most pastors rely on input results to validate the mission's success.** Output results, not input, are the only true measure of the mission.

IMPACT RESULTS

Impact results capture the broader effect of the church in the surrounding city or community. Think of it as the positive difference that is made from the sum of believers influencing a region or pursuing a specific kind of social impact together. An example of an impact result would be lowering the number of homeless people or reducing the percent of teen-age pregnancy or increasing the high-school graduation rate in an area.

A tree is a useful analogy to relate input, output, and impact results. Let's imagine a Florida orange tree soaking in the sun and drinking in gallons of rainwater. We could actually measure exposure to light and absorption of water as input results. After all you can't have healthy citrus without them. Output results reflect the total number of good oranges produced.

Impact results are the happy faces and healthy bodies of little Joey and Suzi as they guzzle down fresh OJ with their scrambled eggs.

What is the significance of these three kinds of results for vision casting? That answer is for another post.

Meanwhile you might enjoy my new book from which this post was taken. It's my first published work since [Church Unique](#) on innovation and vision. The title is [FLUX: Four Paths to the Future](#), which is available to iPad and iPhone users through [Leadership Network's](#) new app called [Leadia.](#)