

Evangelism vs. Disciple Making

Jesus commanded his Church to (a) proclaim the Gospel message (evangelize), and (b) to make disciples. Evangelism and the making of disciples are two complementary tasks.

Mark 16:15 *"Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation"*

Matt 28:19 *"Therefore go, and make disciples of all nations [ethne]"*

Evangelism

- Often broad in focus, communicating to many individuals
- Generally precedes the making of disciples
- Focuses on the essence of the Gospel message
- Anticipates little prior knowledge of the Gospel
- Anticipates both a receptive, open audience and a skeptical, questioning audience
- Can be large-scale and somewhat impersonal or very direct and personal
- May be short-term
- Utilizes communication tools developed specifically for the task
- May be difficult to measure the effectiveness

Disciple Making

- Narrow in focus, dealing with a relatively few individuals
- Generally is a result of evangelism
- Often personal, mentor to disciple
- Emphasizes depth of understanding, and application of understanding
- Requires commitment from the disciple, and from the mentor
- Requires substantial amounts of time
- Utilizes communication tools developed specifically for the task
- Results are somewhat measurable

Implications to the fulfillment of the Great Commission

- The "Great Commission" may be understood to include both evangelization and the making of disciples.
- The world may conceivably be completely evangelized before disciples are made from all ethne.
- Conversely, disciples may be made from among all ethne before the world is completely evangelized.
- Only the Lord knows when the Great Commission will be fulfilled, but Matthew 24:14 suggests the critical factor may be world evangelization. However, the implication in Matthew 28: 19-20 is that disciples will in fact be made among all ethne. They are complementary tasks.

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