

Missions vs. Evangelism/Outreach: Is there a difference? Does it Matter?

- Opening Discussion – What are your initial thoughts to this question? What factors might contribute to the conversation? What Biblical principles might you point to for your answer?
- Quotables –

“When everything is mission, nothing is mission.” Stephen Neill

“The mission of God cannot be the catch all that includes everything from folding bulletins, to picking up trash on the highway, to coaching a ball team, to the gospel infiltrating a previously unreached people.” Ed Stetzer

“Every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter.” Charles Spurgeon

“Every Christian s a missionary, every non-Christian a mission-field. Missions is simply this: Every heart with Christ is a missionary, every heart without Christ a mission field.” Winkie Pratney and Count Ludwig Von Zinzendorf

➔ Which definitions resonate with you most? And why? What passages from Scripture might tip the scales for you?

- Definitions¹:

1. Missions –

- a) The work of the Church in reaching across cultural, religious, ethnic, and geographic barriers to advance the work of making disciples of all nations.
- b) Making disciples of the nations (Matt 28:19) where Christ’s Name is not known, adored, and worshipped.
- c) Therefore, a missionary is someone who is sent (Rom 10:15)² across a boundary to *where the Gospel is not* to see a church planted (not just converts made) that can reach everyone in that place without the missionary being present (through the work of witnesses, evangelists, pastors, etc.)

2. Evangelism – Sharing the good news of salvation in Christ (Acts 1:8)

3. Outreach – Making an impact, serving/helping people *where you live* by ministering/volunteering within *your* context. (Gal 6:9-10)

4. Unreached People³ – A people group among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize this people group without outside assistance.

“An unreached person is not someone in our churches who doesn’t follow Christ. An unreached person is not even a neighbor who doesn’t follow Christ and has never heard a clear presentation of the gospel (but could if we would simply cross the street. An unreached person is someone with no access to the gospel and who could not hear it even if they wanted to.” Spitters and Ellison

5. Unengaged People – No known active church planting underway

- Motivating Factors:

¹ *When Everything is Missions*, Spitters and Ellison

² “If we don’t go, they won’t hear.” David Platt

³ <https://joshuaproject.net/unreached/1>

1. Piper's Questions⁴ –

- a) Will anyone experience eternal conscious torment under God's wrath?
- b) Is the work of Christ the necessary means provided by God for eternal salvation?
- c) Is it necessary for people to hear of Christ in order to be eternally saved?

→How might you answer these questions?

"If churches don't make it a priority to reach all peoples and instead expend the vast majority of their energies and resources where the potential to reach the largest number of individuals with the gospel is possible, at home, then individuals within those people groups cut off from the light of the gospel can't hear it, at least not from us. When they perish in their sins without Christ, what awaits them is an eternity of conscious terrifying torment, separated from God."
Spitters and Ellison

David Platt [Video](#) (What Happens to People Who Never Hear the Gospel?) → 12:45...

7 Truths from Romans⁵:

- All People Know God (1:18-20)
- All People Reject God (1:21-25)
- There are no innocent people in the world/All people are guilty of sin before a Holy God (3:9-20)
- We can't overcome our guilt ourselves⁶ (3:23)
- God has made a way of salvation for the lost – faith in Jesus (3:21-26)
- People cannot come to God apart from faith in Jesus Christ (3:27-10:17)
- If we don't go, they won't hear. If they don't hear, they won't believe. If they don't believe, they will be condemned

→Reactions to the video?

2. Statistics⁷ –

- 335+ Million Evangelical Christians Worldwide
- 100,000 Evangelicals for each unengaged
- 40.6% of the world's 16,584 people groups are unreached
- .01% of the personal income of Christians (\$1 out of every \$10,000 is given to global foreign missions
- 90.4% of "missionaries" working among *reached* peoples (4 billion individuals)
 - 73.1% serve Christians
 - 7.1% serve people of ethnic religious
 - 3.4% serve non-religious
 - 3% serving Muslims
 - 1.5% serving Buddhists
 - 1.3% serving Hindus
 - 1 % serving all others
- 9.6% of missionaries work with the unreached⁸ (2.7 billion individuals)
- 99.5% of church spending is focused on the reached while .5% is focused on the unreached

⁴ *Let the Nations Be Glad*

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yjVXajnwcs>

⁶ If people go to heaven if they never hear the gospel, we shouldn't tell them the gospel.

⁷ *When Everything is Missions*

⁸ Hindus (6%), ethnic religious (animistic/tribal people – 3.8%), Muslims (3%), and Non-Religious (.6%), Other Unreached (.2%)

What explains the data?

- a) A broadened definition of missions⁹
“When we combine local ministry and global missions into one category, we more often than not end up neglecting global missions. Diffusing missions responsibility and making everything missions does not tend to centralize the priority of taking the gospel to all nations – on the contrary, it marginalizes it.” Spitters and Ellison
- b) A false conception of “effectiveness” – outsourcing missions and investing in “local mission”
“Massive numbers of Christians have re-directed their giving away from the ‘more expensive and less effective’ Western workers to the most cost-effective native missionaries. Western Christians’ desires have been manipulated to buy missions ‘on sale’ and write checks rather than send their own sons and daughters; the multi-million dollar native missionary empire was born.”¹⁰

So what?

- a) Meditate on the great commission (Matt 28:19)
- b) Pray about missions (Matt 9:37; Rom 10:11-17)
 - Talk to a pastor about how to think about and move toward becoming a missionary
 - Think about theological training
- c) Pray for the unreached (see joshuaproject.net)
- d) Commit to giving to the local church¹¹ as it partners with missionaries to the unreached

⁹ “Maintaining a narrow definition of missions will be a more useful tool for the Church in fulfilling her mission.” Spitters and Ellison

¹⁰ The truth is that most native missionaries are not breaking new ground for the spread of the gospel among thousands of unreached people groups...

¹¹ Not every local church is created equal – if you have questions regarding what local church to commit to, please don’t hesitate to ask. Christ centeredness and expository preaching are essential ingredients for choosing a healthy church.