

Start your study here

Read Read, Record, Reflect, Respond

Prayerfully	Reflectively	Extensively	Creatively	Intensively	Specifically	Effectively
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Romans 15:14-33

Repeated
Alike
Different
Accentuated
Related
Think Context!

- 14 I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers,
 that you yourselves are
 full of goodness,
 filled with all knowledge
 and able to instruct one another.
- 15 But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder,
 because of the grace given me by God
- 16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles
 in the priestly service of the gospel of God,
 so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable,
 sanctified by the Holy Spirit.
- 17 In Christ Jesus, then,
 I have reason to be proud of my work for God.
- 18 For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished
 through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience—
 by word and deed,
 by the power of signs and wonders,
 by the power of the Spirit of God
 —so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum
 I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ;
- 20 and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel,
 not where Christ has already been named,
 lest I build on someone else’s foundation,
- 21 but as it is written,
 “Those who have never been told of him will see,
 and those who have never heard will understand.”
- 22 This is the reason why I have so often been hindered from coming to you.
- 23 But now,
 since I no longer have any room for work in these regions,
 and since I have longed for many years to come to you,
- 24 I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain,
 and to be helped on my journey there by you,
 once I have enjoyed your company for a while.
- 25 At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints.
- 26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution
 for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem.
- 27 For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them.
 For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings,
 they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings.
- 28 When therefore I have completed this
 and have delivered to them what has been collected,
 I will leave for Spain by way of you.
- 29 I know that when I come to you
 I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.
- 30 I appeal to you, brothers,
 by our Lord Jesus Christ
 and by the love of the Spirit,
 to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf,
- 31 that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea,
 and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,
- 32 so that by God’s will I may come to you
 with joy
 and be refreshed in your company.
- 33 May the God of peace be with you all. Amen. (ESV)

Review: Out of love for God and other believers, Christians are to understand and accept the differences in Christian practice of other brothers. Not despising or judging but willing to give up individual freedoms for the benefits of others.
 Observations: 1) Repetition 2) Command and absence of commands 3) purpose statements
 Question: What's the difference between evangelism and missions?

Outline	
Paul's Motivation and Mission	15:14-21
Paul's Plans and request for Prayer	15:22-33

Romans 15:14-33

14 I myself am satisfied about you, my **brothers**,
 that you yourselves are
 ① full of goodness,
 ② filled with all knowledge

Three key characteristics of a mature church
 Moral goodness of all kinds (honest in dealing with others)
 Full of knowledge
 Able to reproduce

15 **But** on some points I have written to you very **boldly** by way of **reminder**,
 because of the grace given me **by God**

Basics need to be reviewed and brought back into priority (1 Cor 4:17; 2 Tim 1:6; 2:8, 14; Titus 3:1)

16 to be a minister of **Christ Jesus** to the Gentiles
 in the priestly service of the **gospel of God**,
so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable,
 sanctified **by** the **Holy Spirit**.

1:1, 5

Paul's Mission

1:13

17 In **Christ Jesus**, then,
 I have reason to be proud of my **work for God**.

18 **For** I will not venture to speak of anything except what **Christ** has accomplished
 through me to bring the **Gentiles to obedience**—

1:5 obedience of faith

Paul's Mission Explained

19 ① by word and deed,
 ② by the power of signs and wonders,
 ③ by the power of the **Spirit of God**
 —**so that** from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum

Does not mean that all responded, but the gospel taken to those regions, church established to complete the work in their areas

20 **I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ**;
 and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel,
 not where **Christ** has already been named,
 lest I build on someone else's foundation,
 21 but as it is written,
 "Those who have never been told of him will see,
 and those who have never heard will understand."

22 **This is the reason** why I have so often been hindered from coming to you. ← 1:10-13

23 **But now,**
 since I no longer have any room for work in these regions,
 and since I have longed for many years to come to you,

Future Travel Plans

3 rd Spain
2 nd Rome on the way to
1 st Jerusalem

24 I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain,
 and to be helped on my journey there by you,
 once I have enjoyed your company for a while.

Present Plans/responsibility

25 At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints.

26 For Macedonia and Achaia **have been pleased** to make some contribution
 for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem.

Acts 11:27-30; 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8-9

27 For they **were pleased to do it**, and indeed **they owe it to them**.
 For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings,
 they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings.

Notice the twin motivations—a willing heart and a privileged obligation

28 When therefore I have completed this
 and have delivered to them what has been collected,
 I will leave for Spain by way of you.

29 I know that when I come to you
 I will come in the fullness of the **blessing of Christ**.

30 I appeal to you, **brothers**,
by our Lord Jesus Christ
and by the love of the Spirit,
to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf,
31 that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea,
and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,
32 **so that** **by God's will** I may come to you
with joy
and be refreshed in your company. ← **1:12**
33 May the **God of peace** be with you all. Amen. (ESV)

Request for prayer

Working Idea (this is to help you see how the main idea was developed)

- Paul’s confidence in the Romans’ spiritual maturity
- Paul’s mission and ministry motivation—to those who had not yet heard
- Paul’s desire to visit the Romans and be sent by them—after completing a needed journey to Jerusalem

Main idea:

Clear and motivating mission is necessary to accomplish what God wants from us.

Teaching idea/explanation:

This is a simple yet long passage, so rather than trying to teach all the elements, we will concentrate mainly on Paul’s philosophy of ministry or what we might call his ministry vision and several general applications that can be drawn from Paul’s life and ministry.

Based on what the passage teaches, we will also look at how Calvary is seeking to implement its missions vision.

Introduction

What are the marks of a mature person? (Or one who is maturing?)



Talk about it

What are the marks of a church that is spiritually mature?

From the preceding context: mutual love, honor and respect

From this passage we will learn: morally upright, knowledgeable and able to instruct itself

Review

The mercies of God motivate us to a consecrated life (living sacrifice) that does not allow the world and its belief system to force us into its mold but results in transformation by the renewing of our minds, leading to doing the will of God particularly in humble service within the Body of Christ.

Love one another and the things that are good, hate what is evil. And in the midst of evil, seek to live at peace with all, not retaliating evil for evil, bless and minister to those who are against you. Submit to governing authorities who have been given authority by God. Seek to fulfill the Law by loving neighbors and doing good and living right (righteously).

A practical demonstration of love is seen in our acceptance of other believers, differences and all. Seeking to do all we do, to the Lord and out of love and humility we seek the greater good of others to the glory of God. Not judging their practices and it may require forgoing freedoms for the sake of the weak, so as not to cause them to stumble. Sacrificing our individual rights demonstrates love of others and a submission to God. Seek to maintain peace and build others up.

It is with this kind of love that we are to approach our relationships with other Christians—especially when we disagree on disputable matters—accepting one another for the glory of God.

Overview/Summary

As the apostle of the Gentiles, Paul has received a particular commission to bring the gospel to the Gentiles, thereby playing a major role in extending the promises made to Abraham. He has endeavored to plant churches in virgin areas among the Gentiles to fulfill his mission and extend God’s saving promises to Gentiles. Paul hopes to arrive in Rome fairly soon, desiring that Rome would function as his home base for a mission to Spain, where the gospel had not yet been proclaimed. The collection for believers is not a mere excrescence in the Pauline mission, for the generosity of Gentiles for the poor in Jerusalem testifies to the solidarity of the new people of God and is tangible evidence that the promises made to Abraham have been fulfilled. When Jews and Gentiles are in harmony in Christ, then the new humanity promised in the OT is becoming a reality. Paul closes this section by soliciting the prayer of the Roman believers for his protection in

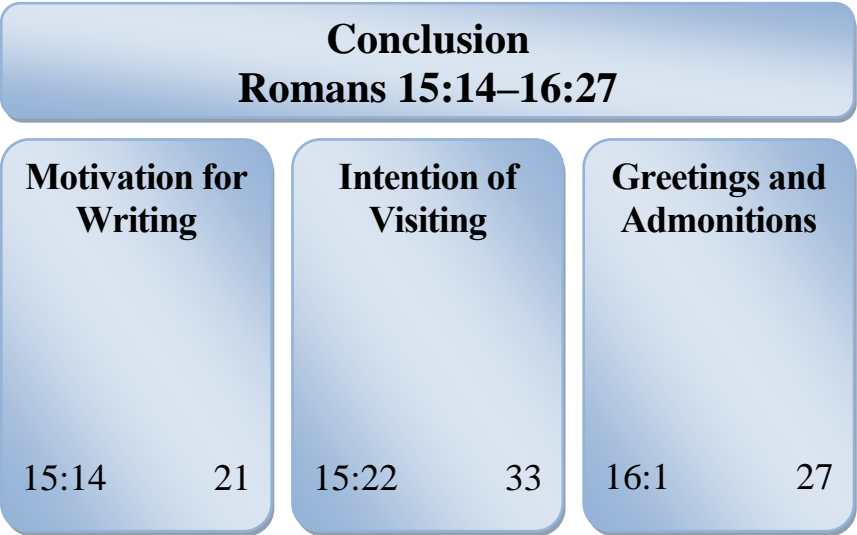
Jerusalem, for he will be unable to use Rome as the base for his Spanish mission if he dies in Jerusalem. He also asks prayer for acceptance of the collection in Jerusalem since acceptance of the collection demonstrated Christian unity and love.¹

Preview

What remains makes up the closing. Paul includes in 15:14 – 16:27 the elements typical of his letter closings:

- Reference to travel plans (15:14 – 29)
- Request for prayer (15:30 – 32)
- Prayer-wish for peace (15:33)
- Commendation of Paul's ministry associates (16:1 – 2)
- Exhortation to greet one another (16:3 – 15)
- The "holy kiss" (16:16a)
- Concluding warning/exhortation (16:17 – 19)
- Eschatological wish/promise (16:20a)
- Concluding benediction (16:20b)
- Greetings from Paul's associates (16:16b, 21 – 23)
- Doxology (16:25 – 27)²

Paul's travels are the motif that binds together 15:14 – 33. These verses divide into three parts, marked by the address "brothers" in verses 14 and 30 and the transitional "therefore" in verse 22 (not in NIV). Paul's focus in the first section (vv. 14 – 21) is on his special ministry calling and his past travels. In verses 22 – 29, his focus shifts to his future plans and their significance to the Romans. The section concludes with a prayer request for his impending visit to Jerusalem and the contribution for the Christians to be brought there (vv. 30 – 33).³



Catch Phrase / Key Phrase:

To fulfill the ministry of the Gospel

Outline

- I. Prologue:** *Paul's Commission to Preach Christ to the Nations* 1:1-17⁴
- II. Doctrine: Justification—The Righteousness of God Revealed** 1:18–11:36
God's Gracious Provision of Righteousness is Acquired by Faith in Jesus Christ

¹Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker exegetical commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 763.

² Douglas J. Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) p. 485.

³ Douglas J. Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) p. 485.

⁴Adapted from Dr. Harold W. Hoehner's outline (DTS, Spring 1991, Exegesis of Romans 206, unpublished class notes)

III. Duties of the Justified—Righteousness of God Reflected 12:1–15:13

The Justified Believer is to Act According to His Position before God

A. Duty Toward the Assembly 12:1-21

“Therefore” Service 12:1

B. Duty Toward the State 13:1-14

C. Duties toward the Weak and the Strong 14:1-15:13

IV. Conclusion: Paul’s Mission to Proclaim Christ where He had not been Proclaimed 15:14-16:27

Paul concludes his epistle (15:14–16:27) with a brief explanation of his mission, both in general (15:17-21) and specifically with reference to the Romans (15:22-33), followed by final greetings (16:1-27).⁵

A. Motivation for Writing 15:14-21

Paul’s motivation for writing the letter is to justify his boldness because he was appointed a minister of Christ to the Gentiles

B. Intention of Visiting 15:22-33

Paul’s intention of visiting the Romans is finally being realized although he must first go to Jerusalem in order to deliver the offering of the believers of Macedonia and Achaia

1. Desire to visit has been hindered 15:22-24

2. His detour to Jerusalem was to fulfill his responsibility 15:25-29

3. He requests prayer to be delivered from unbelieving Jews and accepted by believing Jews 15:30-33

C. Greetings and Admonition 16:1-27

Exposition / Key Exegetical Issues to be Aware



Think about it

12—16 “Therefore”

Moving from the more doctrinal to the more practical—keeping the practical anchored in the doctrinal and making sure the doctrinal is practical.

15:14–16:27

Paul’s extended conclusion including his affirmation of the Romans, his personal travel plans in order to continue fulfilling his God given, grace driven mission to the Gentiles, final admonitions and greetings.

15:14-33 A Missionaries Prayer Letter

After concluding the body of the letter, Paul moves into a rather lengthy conclusion. The conclusion in many ways sounds like a missionary letter, in which Paul:

- summarizes his ministry purpose
- give information on upcoming travel
- asks for prayer for an important event.

15:14-21 Paul’s Motivation and Mission

Interaction/Question

What are the characteristics of the church in Rome that Paul affirms?

Why does he affirm them?

What is Paul’s driving motivation?

Fulfill this divine calling

What is Paul’s mission?

Proclaim the gospel where it has not been proclaimed

⁵ Daniel B. Wallace, *Romans: Introduction, Argument, and Outline*, bible.org

15:14 Affirmation of the Romans

Paul is confident that in spite of the fact they are still dealing with some struggles (relational struggles between Jews and Gentiles) the church in Rome, as a whole, is spiritually mature.

The terms that he uses, “full of goodness” and “filled with all knowledge” are not just platitudes, they are genuine statements of maturity. Both terms are rather general or broad.

“Goodness” speaks of moral integrity and proper treatment of others
“knowledge” understanding of true, with the “all” it is comprehensive understanding—thorough

What I find interesting is Paul’s statement, after his longest most theological letter, that they are able to teach each other. The church was able to be a self-sustaining, self-reproducing church—the goal of any church.

The “teach” or “instruct” is also broad and would include general instruction, pastoral admonition, correction and rebuke.

15:15-16

So his letter, though bold in areas of their weakness and direct in areas of belief, was simply a needed reminder.

He wrote for the purpose of reminding them of truths they already knew.³ Such reminders were part of the common stock of early Christian parenthesis (cf. 1 Cor. 4:17; 2 Tim. 1:6; 2:8, 14; Titus 3:1; Heb. 13:3, 7; 2 Pet. 1:12; 3:2; Jude 5, 17). What Paul emphasizes is that his reminders are rooted in apostolic authority, the grace that commissioned him into the apostolic office (cf. Rom. 1:5; 12:3; 1 Cor. 3:10; Gal. 2:9; Eph. 3:2, 7–8; Col. 1:25).^{4 6}

Paul’s motivation for ministry was his divine calling.

In this section he is using interesting sacrifice and priestly language.

As a priest Paul brings the Gentiles as an offering to God. Paul likely saw this as a fulfillment of Isa. 66:20, which envisions an eschatological offering of the Gentiles (see esp. Scott 1995: 145–47). Just previously (66:18–19) the prophet says that God’s glory will be declared to the nations. Paul presumably saw this as coming to fruition in his ministry. What Paul emphasizes here is his divine commission to bring the gospel to the Gentiles. Grace was bestowed on him (Rom. 15:15) so that he would serve as God’s priestly minister in serving up the Gentiles as an offering.⁷

Isaiah 66:20 And they shall bring all your brothers from **all the nations as an offering to the Lord**, on horses and in chariots and in litters and on mules and on dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the Lord, just as the Israelites bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the Lord. (ESV)

Isaiah 66:18-19 “For I know their works and their thoughts, and **the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues**. And **they shall come and shall see my glory**, 19 and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands far away, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory. **And they shall declare my glory among the nations**. (ESV)

15:17-19a

15:18 Obedience of faith See 1:5

The obedience of the Gentiles is nothing less than the conversion of the Gentiles. It is equivalent to “the obedience of faith” (1:5; 16:26), which is the goal of the Pauline mission among the Gentiles.

³ I understand the construction ὡς ἐπαναμνησκῶν (*hōs epanaminnēskōn*, to remind) to designate purpose.

⁴ For the apostolic authority inherent in these words see Weima 1995: 356.

⁶ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker exegetical commentary on the NT (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 766.

⁷ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker exegetical commentary on the NT (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 767.

Here Paul simply describes it as “obedience” since saving faith must include obedience to be genuine.⁸

15:18c-19

- ① by word and deed,
- ② by the power of signs and wonders,
- ③ by the power of the Spirit of God

The dynamic of the Spirit is the means by which Paul achieved all that he did in every area: his speech, his actions, and his signs and wonders. All of these were energized by the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Thess. 1:5). Paul’s “signs and wonders” refer to the miracles that attested to the truth of the gospel proclaimed (cf. 2 Cor. 12:12; cf. also Acts 2:43; 4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 14:3; 15:12; Heb. 2:4). This is clear in the present context, for the signs and wonders are designed to bring about the obedience of the Gentiles. The terminology harks back to the exodus, in which God’s salvation was accomplished with “signs and wonders” (Exod. 7:3; Deut. 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; 26:8; 34:11; Neh. 9:10; Ps. 104:27 LXX Add. Esth. 10:9; Bar. 2:11). Here the signs and wonders accomplished through Paul are tokens of the inauguration of the new age.⁹

15:19-20 Paul’s specific mission among the Gentiles
“from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum”



Paul probably chooses Jerusalem as the starting point for his ministry because it was the center of Judaism. Both Paul ([Gal. 1:18–19, 22](#)) and Luke ([Acts 9:26–30](#); cf. [26:20](#)) affirm Paul’s ministry in Jerusalem. Why Paul chooses Illyricum is harder to say, since neither he nor Luke ever explicitly indicate that Paul ministered there. But Illyricum, the Roman province covering the area today known as northern Albania and much of Yugoslavia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, was located on the Egnatian Way, a road that Paul traveled as he preached the gospel in Phillipi and Thessalonica. Considering, then, Paul’s preference of sticking to well-traveled Roman roads, he may well have preached in Illyricum during the movements mentioned in [Acts 20:1–2](#).¹⁰

A line drawn from one to another forms an arc, and hence Paul’s language *all the way around* (lit. ‘in a circle’). Paul is saying that he has planted strong, centrally located churches throughout this north-eastern part of the Mediterranean basin. He has therefore ‘fulfilled’ (*plēroō*; NIV ‘fully proclaimed’) his gospel commission in those areas, for his task was to *preach the gospel where Christ was not known* (20). The OT quotation that Paul uses to confirm this mission (21) is from the servant songs of Isaiah (52:15), but it is unlikely that Paul saw himself in the role of the servant.¹¹

⁸Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker exegetical commentary on the NT (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 767.

⁹Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker exegetical commentary on the NT (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 768.

¹⁰Douglas Moo, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Volume 3, Romans to Philemon*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002) 89.

¹¹Moo in D. A. Carson, *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994).

Paul's mission was not to share the gospel with every Gentile, but to establish a church in areas where the Gospel had not penetrated, so that those churches could do the work of evangelism.

Paul's strategy was apparently to plant churches in key cities, and from there coworkers would fan out and evangelize smaller towns (cf. Epaphras in Colossians). He believed that his foundation work was completed in this region, and thus he planned to further the work in areas where Gentile churches were not yet established.^{17 12}

Paul's mission was clear—to preach where the gospel of Christ had not been proclaimed. He clearly saw this as his mandate from God.

More important than geography is Paul's sense of having completed a significant phase of the ministry God has given him. The Greek word for "fully proclaimed" is *pleroo* (lit., fulfill), a word full of theological import in the New Testament. Paul has brought to the divinely ordained climax his commission to plant thriving, self-reproducing churches throughout the region he has described. He is now, therefore, in a position to move on. For, as he explains in [verse 20](#), his ministry is to "preach the gospel where Christ was not known." There is nothing wrong with building on someone else's foundations. Significant ministers like Apollos did just that (see [1 Cor. 3:3 – 11](#)). But this is not the job God has given Paul. He sees himself carrying out the commission given to the servant of the Lord in [Isaiah 52:15](#), revealing the good news to people who have not been told before and who have not heard before ([Rom. 15:21](#)).¹³

Interaction/Question (*Take your time discussing these issues*)

Read the Global Ministries position paper on the least reached

What is the difference between mission and evangelism?

Many people do not want to make a distinction, but there is a helpful distinction.

Evangelism is the responsibility of all Christians to reach those in their circle of influence, all those whom God brings them into contact with, with the life saving and transforming truth of the Gospel.

If you do not feel adequate or capable in sharing your faith, Calvary's LIFE ministry would be a great place to start.

Missions is also the responsibility of all Christians, but may not be the active involvement of all.

Missions involves the crossing of distance, language and/or culture to share the Gospel.

We are all to be evangelists and we are all to have a global focus so that the fame of the Lord would be proclaimed to all nations.

In our increasingly multi-ethnic society the lines between evangelism and missions do at times get blurred, but it is helpful to understand our personal responsibilities and our corporate responsibilities.

We all have personal responsibilities to share what God has done for us through Jesus Christ, whether we are gifted for the ministry of evangelism or not. We all have personal responsibilities to participate in the global proclamation of the Gospel, whether we are called to cross the barriers of distance, language and/or culture. We may be the senders, supporters, intercessors or goers. Our passion for the proclamation of the Gospel to all nations, ethnic groups, languages and tribes may mean we serve God by giving our children to that task.

So are we purposeful and passionate about sharing the Gospel with others?

As a church how do we learn from Paul's mission and model? What can we apply?

How does looking back at the command to the Disciples in Acts 1:8 help clarify our role?

¹⁷ Thus Paul is not specifically saying that he must personally preach in virgin areas so that Christ will come soon (contra Munck 1959: 48–55; Käsemann 1980: 377; Dunn 1988b: 864). Nor is the idea that "the Gospel is fulfilled when it has taken full effect" (Friedrich, *TDNT* 2:732; cf. also Weima 1995: 357). Rather, the reference is to Paul's pioneer missionary work (so Cranfield 1979: 762).

¹² Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker exegetical commentary on the NT (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 770.

¹³ Douglas J. Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) p. 487.

Summary

Paul’s confidence in the Romans’ spiritual maturity
 Paul’s mission and ministry motivation
 Paul’s desire to visit the Romans and be sent by them

Principle:

Success in ministry is always God’s doing and to His glory
 Paul was able to “boast” in what God had done through him, not in the sense of arrogance, but gratitude that he was used by God. It is clear that Paul gives God the credit (15:18)

15:22-29 Paul’s Plans

Paul returns to one of the themes in the introduction (1:13), reminding the Romans (v. 22) that he was prevented from visiting them previously. The word “therefore” (διό, *dio*) reaches back to provide the reason for the hindrance. Paul was busy planting churches in the area extending from Jerusalem to Illyricum (v. 19).¹ But now this work is completed, and he is free to visit the Romans and garner support from them for his Spanish mission (vv. 23–24). Meanwhile, however, he is on his way to Jerusalem to hand over the collection for the saints (v. 25). Verse 26 explains why there is a collection. The Macedonian and Achaian churches have been pleased to make a contribution. In verse 27 Paul explains (γάρ, *gar*, for) why such a contribution is only right. These Gentiles have received spiritual blessings from the Jews, and thus it is appropriate that they in turn share their material riches. After the gift is securely deposited with the saints in Jerusalem, Paul will visit Rome on his way to Spain (v. 28). He is convinced that his arrival in Rome will be with the fullness of Christ’s blessings (v. 29).¹⁴

In [verse 27](#) we detect why the collection is so important to Paul. It is not just a charitable project; it is also designed to bring into closer fellowship Gentile and Jewish believers. The Gentiles, after all, have benefited spiritually from the Jews. As Paul explains in [11:17 – 18](#), Gentile Christians derive whatever spiritual blessing they experience from the Jewish Messiah and the fulfillment of God’s promises to Israel (cf. also [4:13 – 16](#); [15:7 – 8](#)). The Gentile Christians can partially repay this debt by sharing with the Jews their own material blessings.¹⁵

Interaction:

While there are theological overtones to the financial gift of the Gentiles to the Jews that was unique to that time.



Talk about it

What can we learn and what applications can we draw from the willing participation of the Gentiles in meeting the needs of the “poor.”

Principle:

The universal Church, the Body of Christ, should care for its own.
 This does not mean we should not care for others as well, but it is striking the Gentiles from Asia Minor, though they had never meet the poor Jews that lived in Israel and Jerusalem, still cared enough to give sacrificially. (See 2 Corinthians 8-9)

They gave in response to the need—as though it was their privileged obligation.

¹ For this understanding see Sanday and Headlam 1902: 410; Murray 1965: 216; Cranfield 1979: 766; Wilckens 1982: 123–24; Dunn 1988b: 871.

¹⁴ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker exegetical commentary on the NT (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 773.

¹⁵ Douglas J. Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) p. 490.

15:30-33 Paul's request for Prayer

Two requests:

~To be rescued from unbelievers

Paul had often experienced the hostility of Jews toward him and his message

~That the gift would be received by the Jewish believers

Paul was hopeful that the Jewish believers would understand the connection they had with believing Gentiles and would accept their gift—not reject it on the grounds of it being “unclean.”

Paul summons the Romans to pray for the collection that is about to be delivered to Jerusalem and for his protection there. The acceptance of the collection would signify solidarity between Jews and Gentiles, which the Romans understand by now to be at the center of the Pauline gospel and a symbol that the promises made to Abraham are being fulfilled. If Paul is spared and the collection is a success, then his visit to Rome will be one of joy and rest.¹⁶

Principle/Application

Again, though Paul's situation was specific, we can learn principles from what he asked the Romans to do for him.

Be willing to ask people to pray for you—requires humility

Be faithful in praying for those who are ministering the Gospel, locally and globally

Summary

Two of the most potentially significant principles in these verses — Paul's description of his ministry (vv. 16 – 22) and the collection (vv. 25 – 27) — yield confusing answers. On the one hand, both contain elements unique to that time and place. Paul is not just *any* minister, but *the* apostle to the Gentiles. As we have seen, Paul has a unique ministry, predicted in Scripture, to open the door of faith to the Gentiles. Some of what he says about his ministry, then, will not be transferable to us today. The same is true of the collection. Paul viewed this as a way that the Gentiles who shared in Israel's spiritual blessings could repay that debt to the Jerusalem Christians. No other charitable collection in history will have quite this significance. On the other hand, what Paul says here about his ministry also contains elements true for any ministry, and some find parallels in other New Testament passages. The same is true for the collection.¹⁷

Paul's example may also suggest that our missions work should have as its goal the planting of self-reproducing churches. Sometimes we do not stay long enough in a given area for a church to reach this critical mass. Perhaps more often, however, the missionary stays too long, beyond the time when the help of foreigners is any longer needed.¹⁸



What do we learn
About God?

His goal is the fame of His name, which requires believers to proclaim it to all ethnic and language groups.



Act on it

What role are you playing in local outreach?
What role are you playing in global outreach?

¹⁶Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker exegetical commentary on the NT (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 781.

¹⁷ Douglas J. Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) p. 492.

¹⁸ Douglas J. Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) p. 498.

Appendix 1: Reaching the Least Reached



Calvary Church
Global Ministries Position Paper

The Least Reached

Broad Ministry Context

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Every church regardless of its size should understand and respond to the Great Commission as given in the Bible. This commission is calling the church to make disciples of all nations or ethnic groups of the world. (Matt 28:19-20) It is equally beneficial for the church at large to understand how God has worked through the church over many years to do this for His glory.

In the last several centuries, God moved His people in several directions to help accomplish the task. William Carey and Adoniram Judson ushered into the church a new vision for the coastal areas of the globe. Less than 100 years later a new missionary thrust into the uncharted interiors of vast countries was begun through Hudson Taylor. Calvary Church, over the years, contributed heavily to this ongoing focus. Calvary helped establish the church where it previously did not exist. In the last several decades the Holy Spirit has awakened the church at large to another ministry focus to finish the task. This focus is penetrating the last remaining ethnic groups who are without the Gospel. It is often referred to as reaching the least reached people groups of our world. Again, Calvary Church desires to heavily contribute toward reaching these least reached peoples. We recognize this shift in focus to be strategic because it once again establishes the church where it previously did not exist.

Specific Ministry Rationale

The Bible teaches that the message of redemption is intended to reach every tribe, language, people and nation. (Rev 5:9) Therefore, the church is to conscientiously take the Gospel to others both locally and globally. Taking the Gospel locally will require a selfless and obedient effort on the part of each believer. (II Cor 5:14-21) Taking the message globally will require a selfless and **unique** effort. (Rom 10:12-15) It requires messengers directed by God to cross barriers of distance, culture and language to deliver the Gospel. It should be a **primary** (not exclusive) effort of the church for the following reasons:

1. **Some ethnic groups have received the Gospel and others have not.** As a result, you have just two audiences for the Gospel. You have the unevangelized and the least reached. The unevangelized are the lost people within the sound of the Gospel. You also have the least reached. These are lost people without access to the Gospel.

There are many lost people and unmet needs locally. Yet, if the church is present in the culture, then the primary agent for making disciples is in place. If the primary agent is not in place, the **unique** efforts must begin. The remedy is to identify someone (especially directed by God) to cross the appropriate barriers of distance, culture and language to bring the Gospel. The result is global ministry. To focus primarily on the least reached is to become **strategic** in ministry. It is strategic because it brings the Gospel to people who do not presently have it. These people are isolated from the Good News.

2. **The least reached have generally been inaccessible or resistant to the Gospel.** They are located in dark and difficult places. Spiritual breakthroughs will only follow times of sacrifice and perseverance on the part of the church. It is estimated that approximately 2.5 billion people in some 6,000 people groups are without the Gospel. In some areas Islam reigns supreme, sometimes in a fundamentalist form that stifles spiritual penetration. Others are gripped by the idolatry of Buddhism or Hinduism. Some live in a secular culture where Christianity is viewed as a relic. Yet, we believe that Christ died for their sins so they might come to know Him and give Him the glory due His name. (I John 2:2, II Cor 5:15) Those who have not yet heard should be our **primary** (not exclusive) global priority.

3. **A more focused approach to reach the least reached will bring about greater spiritual stewardship of resources.** Presently the evangelical missionary force of North America is unevenly deployed throughout the world. Approximately 80% are serving among the unevangelized rather than the least reached. Among those that identify themselves with the Christian faith in North America there is one missionary for every 796 people. Among Muslims there is one missionary for every 296,786 people. Among Hindus it is one for every 177,074 people. Among Buddhists, it is one for every 176,150 people. Often missionaries have been sent to places where the church has already been established. When we focus on the least reached, we focus on the remaining unfinished task which is **strategic**.

In conclusion, we must ask ourselves an important question. The answer will reveal just how effective we perceive our ministry to be. Here is the question:

To what extent will the remaining unfinished task be completed if all North American churches mirrored our efforts and priorities?

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Statistics represent the unimax numbering of people groups because of its knowledge and details related to church planting efforts globally.

1. Among North Americans: 1 missionary per 796 people
2. Among Tribals: 1 missionary per 16,596 people
3. Among Minor Religions: 1 missionary per 34,595 people
4. Among Non Religious: 1 missionary per 69,058 people
5. Among Folk Chinese 1 missionary per 133,269 people
6. Among Buddhists: 1 missionary per 176,150 people
7. Among Hindus 1 missionary per 177,074 people
8. Among Muslims 1 missionary per 296,786 people

Romans 15:14-33

- 14 I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers,
that you yourselves are
full of goodness,
filled with all knowledge
and able to instruct one another.
- 15 But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder,
because of the grace given me by God
- 16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles
in the priestly service of the gospel of God,
so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable,
sanctified by the Holy Spirit.
- 17 In Christ Jesus, then,
I have reason to be proud of my work for God.
- 18 For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished
through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience—
by word and deed,
- 19 by the power of signs and wonders,
by the power of the Spirit of God
—so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum
I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ;
- 20 and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel,
not where Christ has already been named,
lest I build on someone else's foundation,
- 21 but as it is written,
“Those who have never been told of him will see,
and those who have never heard will understand.”

22 This is the reason why I have so often been hindered from coming to you.

23 But now,

 since I no longer have any room for work in these regions,
 and since I have longed for many years to come to you,

24 I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain,
 and to be helped on my journey there by you,
 once I have enjoyed your company for a while.

25 At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints.

26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution
 for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem.

27 For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them.
 For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings,
 they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings.

28 When therefore I have completed this
 and have delivered to them what has been collected,
 I will leave for Spain by way of you.

29 I know that when I come to you
 I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

30 I appeal to you, brothers,
 by our Lord Jesus Christ
 and by the love of the Spirit,
 to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf,

31 that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea,
 and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,

32 so that by God's will I may come to you
 with joy
 and be refreshed in your company.

33 May the God of peace be with you all. Amen. (ESV)

Conclusion
Romans 15:14–16:27

**Motivation for
Writing**

15:14

21

**Intention of
Visiting**

15:22

33

**Greetings and
Admonitions**

16:1

27