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Sunday, February 18, 2018  
Did You Know?

## Pioneering Missions

At the end of the letter to the Romans, Paul writes, “It has always been my ambition to preach the Gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else’s foundation (15:20).” When we read this verse, if misunderstood, we could start viewing Paul as some sort of glory monger, very prideful, unwilling to come in second, and wanting all the credit, but I think that would be a complete misunderstanding of this verse and of Paul. Paul received his calling to be a missionary to the Gentiles (that is, the unreached) from Christ himself (see Acts 9:15). Shortly after his conversion he, along with Barnabas, embarked on their first missionary journey to the unreached world. This was followed up by two more journeys where he visited the churches he had established in the earlier journeys, but with each new journey he expanded the reach of the Gospel to more and more unreached cities in the Mediterranean.

So, this verse is not at all about Paul’s selfish ambition. Rather, he is merely stating Christ’s specific calling to be a pioneer missionary. Remember, it was Paul himself who wrote that some plant the seed and some water, but it is God who causes the growth. Paul understands that his special calling was to be a seed planter, a first responder, like a combat marine. This is the very reason that he had not yet been able to visit Rome. He says, “This is why I have often been hindered from coming to you.” (15:22) As well, when we look at Paul’s ministry pattern it was this: *Get in. Preach the Gospel. Expect God to bring about conversion. Disciple the new believers. Appoint elders/shepherds, and then leave to the next city. Repeat.*

Paul’s calling was to be a pioneer, to go all out Star Trek with his life. This is at the heart of the missions vision for our church as well. We want to go where no one has gone before. We are committed to reach the unreached and the unengaged. Bihar is such a place where only 0.12% of its 114 million people are Christian. At the same time your workplace, your campus, your neighborhood may also be such a place. In our day and age in Canada, we can no longer assume that people know the Gospel or even have the vaguest idea what Christianity is. That’s why God has called you to those places. Today, as we adopt the state of Bihar, India as our new missions focus, let us recommit ourselves to reach the unreached here in Toronto and among the global unreached.

Soli Deo Gloria.  
*Pastor Peter*