



Ralph D. Winter Research Center

By **DR. DANNY HUNTER**

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Greetings, *Mission Frontiers* readers! I'm Danny Hunter and I'm the new director of the Ralph D. Winter Research Center. I am very excited about what the Center has done in the past, and where we are headed in the future. The Center exists to further the missiological insights of Dr. Winter and to continue to serve the wider Great Commission community in his pioneering spirit.

The RDWRC is unique in many ways, including its distinct function. While the Center is a constituent institute of William Carey International University, we are actually a joint project between Frontier Ventures and WCIU. That means that our staff, our resources, and our priorities all flow from both institutions. This arrangement gives us an opportunity to be and do things that neither FV nor WCIU can be or do on their own. It also provides a platform for these two sister institutions, both founded by Dr. Winter, to partner closely together. And it puts me, as the Director, in the peculiar position of facilitating a partnership between two institutions with which I have had little personal history until now. I have greatly enjoyed getting to know FV and WCIU and I am quite pleased about the prospect of working with both organizations for a very long time to come.

For those of you who are unacquainted with the Center, we are located near the former campus of WCIU at 1705 N. Sierra Bonita Avenue in Pasadena, CA. The Center houses several special collections, including Dr. Winter's personal papers, many of the personal papers of Dr. Donald McGavran (who founded Fuller's School of World Mission), and the organizational archives of FV and some other Winter-related organizations. We also have Dr. Winter's and Dr. McGavran's personal libraries; nearly all of the volumes published by William Carey Publishing; one of the more extensive collections of South Asian books in the US; and several other books of missiological significance. All those resources are available to anyone who would like to use them, provided they make an appointment. In the future, we'd like to create a more formal program for missionaries on home assignment (from FV and other organizations) to come and do some research into areas of personal interest and professional enrichment, but in the meantime, please feel free to reach out to set up an appointment to visit at rdwrc.wciu.edu/opportunities-research-center.



We have lots of people to thank for making these collections available. Helen Darsie is our Archivist

extraordinaire. Greg Parsons has done an amazing job getting this center started and organized. Both of them are FV staff who are integral parts of the Center's ongoing work to ensure Dr. Winter's legacy continues to impact the study and practice of mission. In addition, we have a small army of volunteers whose tireless work to catalog all of our collections is often hidden but always appreciated.

Still, not everyone can make a trip to Pasadena. In fact, I do most of my work as Director remotely from my home in Wilmore, KY. That's why we have our RDW Research Center website (rdwrc.wciu.edu). Here you'll find all kinds of resources and hidden gems. We curate articles, videos, and book reviews (among other content) that will help you explore how ideas that Dr. Winter cared deeply about are being carried forward today. We are also continually updating the site with special discoveries from our archives. You'll want to explore what Helen has found there (including some rare video footage and audio recordings).



In the future, we plan to make our catalog available to peruse on our website so you can see what we have available before you decide to make the trek to Pasadena. For now, you can reach out and ask us if there is something you are looking for. And eventually, we plan to have most of our archival holdings on our website as well (as searchable PDFs). So, if you find yourself wondering what Dr. Winter thought about unreached people groups, or Korean missionaries, or Guatemalan food, you'll be able to find out in just a few clicks.

One of the Center's strongest contributions to the world of mission is the annual Winter Memorial Lectureship. FV has been instrumental in carrying this important event off every year. We have been fortunate to gather important thinkers in the realm of missiology to address important topics facing us today. As Andy Bettencourt has mentioned elsewhere in this issue, the lectureship is coming off an extraordinarily strong showing this year, and we hope that you will all keep an eye out for us next spring as we confer with a global slate of scholars about mission being done by and alongside the urban poor around the world. We will be publishing specifics, including dates and location, soon. And, as in past years, we will have both in-person and online options available for attendance. We hope to see you there!

Looking toward the future, I've been thinking a lot lately about what it means to be a research center named after Ralph Winter. What is unique about us because we bear that name? What sort of research do we have a responsibility to pursue? I think one answer is that we need to conduct research in three ways. First, we need to do research INTO Dr. Winter and his colleagues/contemporaries. This will mean careful stewardship and expansion of the archive materials that have been entrusted to us. And it will mean making those resources more readily available to researchers around the world. Secondly, we need to do research FROM Dr. Winter. He was a prolific writer and visionary, and the list of interests that he championed is formidable. The Center has a responsibility to delve into these ideas, study them, refine them, and see how they are changing as time passes. And, last but not least, I think we need to also do research BEYOND Dr. Winter. He was always looking toward the next big thing, and he was constantly concerned with the daily realities faced by missionaries. I hope to see the Center get involved in cutting-edge missiological research, with the agenda constructed by the questions being asked by missionaries in the field. This will take time, not to mention close partnerships with several different organizations. But I think we owe it to our namesake to always be searching out new frontiers just beyond our horizons. I am grateful and humbled by the opportunity to direct this kind of institution and I'm excited for what the future holds!

If you have any questions about the Center and where it is headed in the future, I'd be happy to hear from you. Just drop me an email at danny.hunter@wciu.edu. 📧