

Tribute to Dr. Ralph Winter



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I first met Dr. Ralph Winter through the pages of his books in the early 1980s when I was a young seminary student; finally meeting him in person two decades later in a large missions gathering. Though my face-to-face encounters with him were brief, he impacted my life profoundly both as a student of missiology, and as a missions practitioner. Dr. Winter was to me, a distant mentor, a gracious brother in Christ, and an affirming leader.

He was a Multiplying Mentor

Dr. Jake Klassen, one of my first missions professors at Canadian Theological Seminary was a classroom student of Dr. Winter at Fuller Theological Seminary. Everything that Professor Winter had taught Dr. Klassen was passed on to my classmates and me. Dr. Klassen assigned the reading of Dr. Winter's books. In particular, Professor Winter's writings on UPG's (Unreached People Groups) and his Guatemala's discipleship training model, later known to be the TEE (Theological Education by Extension) helped sharpen my skills. So through this network of relationships,

Professor Winter, via Professor Klassen, mentored me, much like Christ multiplied his followers through His first-century disciples.

He was a Gracious Brother in Christ

In October 2004, during the Lausanne Forum in Pattaya, Thailand I was seated across the breakfast table from Dr. Winter, my Distant Mentor, who I would finally meet in person. While I knew him as a Mentor (thanks to his instruction recorded on the pages of his books), in October 2004, I met him as one of the endorsers of my first co-edited volume, *SCATTERED: The Filipino Global Presence*. In his endorsement, he wrote:

This book is both arresting and strategic because it addresses in depth what may well be the most important undigested reality in mission thinking today. We simply have not caught up with the fact that most of the world's peoples can no longer be defined geographically.

When I personally, presented a copy of the book, he looked at me on the eyes and said: "thank you very much for asking me to endorse this significant volume... This DIASPORA MISSIOLOGY will become a major contribution to 21st Century missions." I was moved by Brother Ralph Winter's most gracious and generous encouragement.

He was an Affirming Leader

We met again three years later in Budapest, Hungary during the Lausanne Movement's Bi-annual Leadership Meeting in 2007. Again, we had breakfast together with his wife. There (in Budapest) the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE) appointed me as LCWE's first Senior Associate for Diasporas. After, breakfast Dr. Winter placed his gentle hands on my shoulders, giving me a pat on the back and said: "Joy, congratulations for your appointment. I pray for God's blessings upon your life and ministry..." Again, Dr. Ralph Winter, a world-renown leader, had reached out to me, an obscure servant.

Indeed, Dr. Ralph Winter will be remembered as an affirming leader, a gracious brother in Christ, and a multiplying mentor.

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