

10:30 AM Calvary Chapel By Ralph Winter

Announcer:

Good morning. Welcome once again to the 1994 Biola Missions Conference. I hope you guys are enjoying it. We had a good day yesterday, so just anticipating another one today. Another good day. I just wanted to make a couple of announcements. Again, I put up the seminar changes. It's kind of hard to read from out in the audience, so if you need a copy again of the seminars that have changed locations, you can pick them up in the back of the gym. They're half sheets and they have the changes that have occurred for the 1:30 and 2:30 seminars. And another announcement, exploration sign ups will begin after this session in the back of the gym at the information booth. And so that's where you can start signing up for the different explorations that will be occurring on Friday and then there's one on Sunday as well. And for the explorations, we'll be meeting at 1:00 in Sutherland Auditorium on Friday. So just be prepared for that. Everyone who's involved in exploration, that's where you'll be meeting. And let's see. I think that's it for right now. No more announcements. So right now we're just going to worship some more.

I just want to say I think we're so blessed by everyone who's leading worship during this conference. And I want to say thank you to the group we led this morning and all the others who are leading throughout the conference. Just really sets a mood in our hearts to be receptive to what the speakers have to say and what God is speaking to us. Right now I would like to introduce to you Dr. Ralph Winter. And I found out some really neat-o little bits of information about him, so I'm going to share those really quick. He has four daughters and all of them are

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married to missionaries, so he's got a missionary family. He taught at Fuller Seminary for ten years. And while he was there, our president, Clyde Cook, was one of his students and also Lloyd Quas, who's in Talbot Seminary. So that's another interesting tidbit. And the last one is that Dr. Winter's brother is the president of Westmont College. So I don't know questionable people were inviting here. Anyway, a warm round of applause for Dr. Ralph Winter.

Winter:

Yeah, I think you did make a mistake in inviting a person who has such close connections with Fuller and Westmont. That was really a big mistake. But I think one of the other speakers is a member of the Westmont board of directors, isn't that right? Or was or something like that. So maybe we have to really believe in conversion after all. Western Christianity: resource and obstacle to world missions. Now that's my text, my topic and my notes. That's it. Everything I say from here on is going to reflect in some way on Western Christianity as either or both a resource and an obstacle to missions. Let me begin with an anecdote. I was sitting on the bed in a hotel in Singapore. There wasn't time for the airport bus to come. I was just through a conference there with a church that had been founded seven years before. It now had 7000 members. It was now giving \$250,000 per month to missions. And I was looking at the paper. This is a secular paper. Singapore is a secular country. It's probably the only country in the world that speaks English and uses chopsticks. But anyway, the cover story, the front page story of the paper talked about the explosion-that's their word-of Christianity in Singapore.

In 1950, 3% of the population was Christian, and now 18% was Christian. Well, 18% of the whole country. But two thirds of the country is Chinese, and the Christians are in that two thirds.

They're neither Hindus nor Muslims. And so it's actually more like 25% of the Chinese are Christians. In the universities there, 35% of the students, at a minimum, are Bible studying Christians. Now, you go to any state university in this country or even some of the Christian, formerly Christian universities, you would not find 35% of those students as Bible studying Christians. Well, I knew that much, but I was amazed at what this article said. The fact that Christianity is growing like crazy there. They send more missionaries from Singapore than any other country of the world in terms of the proportion of the population, about four times as many as this country. I knew all those things. But what would they say about this? Well, they were appreciative of some aspects of Christianity. The traditional Chinese religion apparently is out of sync with modern science, but Christianity somehow gets along. They realize their young people realize that it's a plus.

But on the other hand and then they gave two examples that really stunned me. I couldn't have thought of them myself in 1000 years. They talked about the night before. That was sort of the hook for this story. The Oscar awards ceremony in the United States was taking place the previous evening and the whole world, of course, was watching, except for me and quite a few others who don't care a snap about who gets a prize. But anyway, they were going on and on about these effusively, generous minded Americans who were giving credit to other actors and directors and I don't know, everybody who got an award was always saying, oh, no, it wasn't me, it was somebody else giving credit. And I thought, well, what's wrong with that? I'm enough of American to react a little when foreign people criticize us. And then they went on and then they dropped the bombshell. Not one person in 3 hours ever gave any credit to their parents. Oh, well,

why would they give credit to their parents? In America, you don't. In Singapore. You do. Maybe it's just a cultural difference. It doesn't make any difference.

Okay, well, then they went on. The next thing they picked up was school books. Now I know what's wrong with school books. They teach evolution, new age, all kinds of terrible things. Why, I could go on and on. So I was reading, reading, reading. And they're talking about the Dick and Jane stories. What's wrong about the Dick and Jane stories? They actually referred to Dick and Jane and the boy, the dog and the ball, and the policeman and the garbage man and the teacher and all these different people that you run into in society. Well, what's wrong with that? There's no evolution there. There's no sex or sin or whatever. In all those books, they said, there are no parents. Oh, as an American, I wouldn't have thought of that. When I was in the first grade, I didn't think of that either. In America, we don't think about things like that. Now they're worried they're resisting the incursion of Western society on Singapore. There are a lot of people who think that maybe they shouldn't have chosen English as the national language, because maybe that was a big mistake right there. That opens the doors, the floodgates to an enormous amount of evil.

So there's a move to restore Chinese as a language and a few things like that. American Christianity has been a great blessing to Singapore, one of the cleanest, neatest, most orderly countries in the world. At the same time, they fear the Christian influence. "Christian" in quotes, of course. We naturally can't take responsibility for what all these other people do here in America. That's not our fault. Well, now, I've concluded two things. We need the Christians of the other countries to come and help us to see things that we wouldn't normally see. We need to

see them. For example, down there in Singapore, the unthinkable happened. There's a liberal theological college called the Trinity Theological College, which has gone conservative, it's gone evangelicals, been taken over by the evangelicals. You can't imagine that happening in this country. It went the wrong way. Well, the president of that school wrote an article in an anthology of third world theology. His 45 page article was called Filial Piety in the Bible. Filial Piety. That means children, parent relationships. Their understanding of the Bible is very different from our American understanding. Americans have a very, very amazing heritage. I have this little quote from Alexis de Toqueville in 1835, and that's 150 years ago.

1835. What's that? That's in the heyday of Charles Finney. The great revivals that swept this country. A little later on, Moody came into the picture, the Fulton Street prayer meeting. That revival hit this country so hard that it swept clear out to Portland, and it closed down the department stores of the city of Portland for three months because so many people wanted to go and pray. Amazing things happen in this country. In fact, they swept a lot of good things out, like coffee and tea. Hardly anyone who's drinking coffee or tea in this country in those days. Slavery, women's education. Many of the things came in in that hour of history. In fact, that's when the Mormons and the 7th of the Adventists were born. And they're the ones who, like a museum piece. Tell us a little more about the evangelicals back in that period. And if you ever tell anyone that you don't drink coffee, they say, oh, a Mormon. Well, the Mormons got it from the evangelicals. Anyway at that period of history, the Alexis de Toqueville well, see, the Evangelicals of that period were quickly overrun and overlaid by immigration from the Old Country.

And, you know, the Presbyterians, for example, they inherited a lot of Scottish Presbyterians who came with the ability to distill whiskey, built into their bloodstream, practically. And the whole church movement went back on that particular subject. And so we don't really see the Evangelical awakening of the 1830s and 40s unless we strain it through Old World perspectives again. Alexis de Toqueville said he has a little paragraph on the American. Each person withdrawn into himself, behaves as though he is a stranger to the destiny of all other Biola students. No, I just put that in. His children and his good friends constitute him the whole of the human species. Well, it dropped the children out nowadays. As for his transactions with his fellow citizens, he may mix among them, but he sees them not. He touches them, but does not feel them. He exists only in himself and for himself alone. And if on these terms there remains in his mind a sense of family, there no longer remains a sense of society. Well, there no longer remains a sense of family either. So things have changed in the last 150 years, but a lot was already going in the wrong direction 150 years ago.

We need Christians from other countries to come and help us. That's my first point. My second point. We who represent the Lord, and maybe accidentally, America in all the world, we missionaries who are out there preaching Christ, hopefully, and not American culture. We need the help of the Christians who stay home to do a more effective battle with the evils that characterize our country's image abroad and all around the world today. Now, that's the reason for a mission conference, maybe to stop and think a little. For example, I don't know if you people thought that all these Koreans up here, where did they come from? Missions. They wouldn't be here if it weren't for missions. Talbot Seminary and eight other evangelical seminaries would go broke if it weren't for the tuition being paid by Korean students,

incidentally. I mean, I didn't make that up. That was figured out by the president of one of these eight seminaries. There are more Korean-speaking Presbyterian churches in Los Angeles than there are English speaking Presbyterian churches. And that's not the only difference between those two kinds of churches. I'll tell you, I'm a Presbyterian. I can say that. But there are other things in this country.

These people from abroad are being ground to powder by our society. Their family structure is breaking down just automatically following the pattern that we have so carefully and so unthinkingly devised. But there are many things that we don't see in our own society without the help of people from abroad. And I would like to believe that a mission conference would provide a bridge. A link between the Christians here and the Christians there. If nothing else. And that the Christians here would be able to look at their own society through the eyes of the president of the Trinity Theological College and read that 45 page article on family life in the Bible and done through history and around the world. And the massive exception which we find in this country. But let's first of all, stop off with a couple very concrete things. Jimmy Carter said not so long ago, quoting in the World Health Organization that Americans are killing more people in the country of Colombia with our tobacco exports than the Colombians are killing in America through their cocaine exports into this country. I'll repeat that that we're killing more people in Colombia by exporting tobacco products grown in this country with US government subsidy and Department of Agricultural Assistance in international advertisements, filmmaking and things that are being paid for by taxpayers.

We're killing more people there than they're killing here. And that's, of course, on the world level, even worse. Doonesbury, the cartoon strip. Now, why wasn't this in Christianity today? It was in the newspaper in Doonesbury that American tobacco companies over a period of four or five days are being described in their China campaign. They're hoping, they're expecting they wouldn't say hope. They are expecting that 50 million Chinese will be brought to death because of American tobacco products in China, advertised in China. We're really good at advertising and man our American products, whether they're better or not, sweep the market when our advertising specialties roll into place. But it takes US government assistance to do this. Thailand, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong all tried to prevent this kind of very dangerous advertising to go on in their countries. But the State Department has pulled all kinds of powerful economic strings to force those countries to admit our cigarettes. We need the dollar exchange, of course. I remember in Thailand sometime years ago, down on a beach, the missionaries were telling me the three great big American naval vessels came into this port a few months earlier.

And of course, the government had made the arrangements, the navy with their government. Thousands of girls were recruited from all across Taiwan. Those 6000 men, in eleven days spent \$11 million on prostitutes in Taiwan. I mean, in Thailand. This is quite official. It's not publicized until something like Tailhook gets in the papers. But, you know, why aren't Christians speaking out about things like this? Thailand knows what Americans are like. Their beaches are loaded with American tourists looking for one thing: tearing apart the social fabric of their country, bringing AIDS into that country. It's an absolute astonishing thing. I remember years ago at Fuller Seminary I was commenting about the fact that there was already a civil protest against smoking. And I got into quite an argument with the president of the school. And I

remember saying, you know, we're so strong against legalism that we'll allow any vice. Probably in Pasadena every public building will have no smoking signs on it before Fuller Seminary does. Somehow evangelicals are very blind about all kinds of problems. Last week's, Newsweek magazine has a whole page on the impact of alcohol on our society. The thousands and thousands of marriages that are broken up, the problems of crime and the problems of passion that are almost always accompanied with alcohol addiction.

But you don't hear Christians talking about this. And then going back to the Singaporean paper we can't even read the Bible straight without the help of a Chinese theologian from Singapore. You come to a verse like Genesis 2:24. When a boy marries, he leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife and they become one flesh. And our psychology books go on and on about one flesh is the union of man and woman into one new person. And all that kind of stuff. Has nothing to do with that. One flesh. In the Bible, if you trace that phrase, just simply means bloodline. The boy joins the girl's bloodline. But most American books on marriage and family translate that verse in the following. They say, the boy leaves his father and mother and the girl leaves her father and mother and the two form an unstable unit which we have gotten a brand new name for nuclear family. And it breaks down more rapidly than anything else. We have the highest divorce rate in the world. We're not proud of it, but we're focused on the family. I was at their dedication. 15,000 people, 1000 people for their dinner, 100 people for their luncheon.

All of their literature, they don't refer to anything but the nuclear family in their literature. There is no cure for that type of instability. And the Asian Christians can tell us if we'll be willing to listen. You can't provide a solution for an artificial abstraction. Well, why aren't Christians?

Here's a book promoted by the Miniruth Meier Clinic. I don't want to mention any names. Called Love is a Choice. Love is a choice? Who said love is a choice? Love is a choice you cannot turn away from. Anyway, in this book there's a whole chapter on how to cut the ties with your family so you can be a real individual, self-realized Hindu person. I mean, they don't use the word Hindu, but they're describing Hinduism. Where are our missionaries? Where our foreign national Christians who can come and rescue us from the stupidities of? If we're going to misinterpret the Bible to fit our culture, throw the Bible away. We've got to get around that and get beyond that. And it's only the overseas church, ultimately that can help us read the Bible correctly because they don't read it with our colored glasses.

Or take the school system in this country. It pries open the gap between parents and children because it elongates maturity. Adolescence is an artificial creation according to many scholars. It doesn't happen in most countries. And then by the time people get married, their children are much, much younger than they would normally be. And the alienation of generations and the difficulty of understanding is all the greater. But school does a lot of other things. It alienates people. It sets up other kinds of authority beside the parents. I remember my daughter coming home from the 6th grade. My wife had a teaching credential in math. And my daughter would say to my wife, she'd say, mother, you don't understand. The teacher said this is the way to do it. And my wife said, you can see that we're not adept at family names here. My wife says to my daughter, that is not true. Your teacher just doesn't understand what she's saying. What? A teacher not understanding? They're the highest authority. The parents are always wrong. People who come from abroad are really amazed at the way we do things here in this country. We keep people in school much longer than any other country.

In Germany young people, 62% of them are apprenticed, working, studying and working at the same time. They don't have laws that prevent people from getting to work at the age of twelve or 14 like we do in this country. This is kind of a crazy idea. Basically there's a Baskin and Robins ice cream place in South Pasadena that's run by a Vietnamese family. Of course it's against the law, but that's a family that's going to stay together, whether they pray together or not. See, we know that the family that prays together doesn't stay together. That's a perfectly obvious fact. Looking at the evangelical tradition. Well, what is it that keeps families together? Among other things, association. Probably 10,000 evangelical men per year get better acquainted with their secretaries and marry the secretary and divorce their wives. Just because we don't have any Asian instincts about the values and purposes of families working and associating together. We need these Christians from abroad to come and talk to us. Are we listening? Are we aware of that possibility? Not only does Germany have 62% of its younger people in apprenticeship, we have 2%, but they have less people in jail.

A very large proportion of the people in prison today are under 20. The average murderer today is under 16. In Germany these people are at work. In this country they're pushing drugs. That's the only job that they can do, get away with it's. Not legal, of course, but the legal jobs don't pay as well and the legal jobs are illegal. I mean, what I should say the legitimate jobs are illegal to them. What a crazy situation. We need someone to come and talk to us, someone from a foreign country who will tell us this is not the way to bring young people up to postpone involvement, responsibility for years and years and years, marriage, responsibility, earning power this all has to go together. Obviously, there's no solution to getting married at the age that Jesus' got mother

got married because you couldn't hack it. Our society is stacked against you, but we've got to unstack the society. Donald Joy, professor at Asbury Seminary, has a whole book on what's wrong with American family. From this point of view, what about our churches? The people overseas? Boy, they can really tell us about churches. I think of these churches that are holding young people back to say, you got to learn about planting churches before you can be a missionary, when they really can't find out how to plant churches until they become a missionary.

That's where people know how to plant churches. The average church in Guatemala, where I worked for ten years, is in the business of planting at least three other churches. One church with Talale on the coast had 25 other churches they were in the process of establishing. They know how to do it. If I had stayed in this country to learn how to do it, I don't know. That's where I found out about it. We have a great deal to learn. Our larger churches especially have incredible obstacles in any kind of real accountability. My pastor, I have to be willing to admit my church in Pasadena is the Lake Avenue Congregational Church. I grew up in that church. It's a wonderful church. Our pastor some years ago, not the present pastor, talked about by the way, our present pastor is from Biola. So our pastor talked he was teaching through the Bible, came to that passage. Obedience is better than religious sacrifice. And he said it preached a marvelous sermon on obedience. And on the way home, all of a sudden it hit me obedience. At Lake Avenue you can't disobey. A member at Lake Avenue hasn't promised to do anything.

Now, that's a good idea, to get people into the church. I mean, Bill Hybels says that to join that Willow Creek Church or let's say to come there anyway, you don't have to sing anything, you

don't have to say anything, you don't have to sign anything, you don't have to give anything. But if that's all there were to that church, it would be worthless. Because the Gospel of Christ isn't an open ended invitation. Take it or leave it as like a recent book titled. It's a Summons. The Gospel of Christ is a command. It's the power, the authority of God impinging on human existence. And you can't just say, well, tomorrow you have to say yes or no to the authority of the living God. When I accepted Christ, no one told me that meant I had to obey my parents. That wasn't part of the gospel. Well, it's part of the Bible, but we don't think of it as part of the gospel. And all those young people in South Central Los Angeles who brush off their parents and they're out in the streets, parents have no control over them. A lot of them come through the evangelical churches but the gospel that they hear doesn't include anything about the family.

Well, in a church where they don't miss you if you don't come, is that a church? Is it a church? Is Lake Avenue a church? I have thought about this long and hard. By any mission definition, it is not a church. There is no accountability among members. Last Sunday, for instance, they talked about the church family, the church family, the church family. They didn't say anything about the real families that God created. They didn't say anything about I mean, all the people they introduced in fact, they had to shake hands with everybody in every direction front and back. I never even saw any of those people and I will never see them again. They said, These are the people with whom you will be in eternity. Great. But what about between now and eternity? There's nobody in American evangelical churches that it has any horizontal sense of authority. We accept Christ as Lord and Savior and we will tell the rest of the world what God's will for us is. No one is going to tell us, boy, and try to fit people like that into a mission team. And each one opens his Bible, says, well, the Lord tells me to stay in bed today or the next person.

I mean, come on, no football team would ever win a game if everybody in the huddle snapped open their Bible and said, what play should I run this time? You've got to work together to get anything done in our society or in any mission field. We've got to get over and beyond this extreme individualism which is so contrary to the Bible and which only the overseas Christians can tell us. You know what? Our problems in this country loom so large that a person like myself coming here, it hardly would get into my mind to talk about winning the world to Christ or the strategies of reaching all the unreached peoples of the world. I'm loaded with information in that area. I could talk about many exciting things with the exploding church around the world. But what difference does it make if the churches are exploding in Singapore and they're bogging down in this country? This is my country. This country is a resource, a massive resource and a massive obstacle to the cause of missions. Now look, I'm not here to recruit anybody as a missionary. I would like to recruit everybody into the cause of missions.

Understood properly, there is no other cause. It is not one of the options available to a college student to be part of the mission challenge. It is the only story in the Bible. God pushing the darkness out of the hearts of men and nations. That's the story of the Bible. There's no other story in the Bible. It began with Abraham. All the peoples of the world are to be blessed, which does not mean blessed. It means reinherited, if you look at the Hebrew. But nevertheless, the point is, we are not even up to it. Going to an American church and talking about missions. I turn opportunities like that down every day of the week. I just can't stand it. It's like running into an accident ward where everybody is doped up in traction and they're just demobilized completely. Running in there with a tennis racket and saying, Tennis, anyone? And I'm afraid that's true in

most Christian college campuses. We're snowed under. We're bogged down with so many other reflections and considerations the simple, beautiful majesty of God's, global purposes, which are being ruined in this country. As the major, we have more Bibles than all the rest of the world put together.

We are the ones who ought to be bright, shining examples. But our crime rate, our divorce rate, our recidivism rate, practically every measure of social quality is negative in this country compared to other countries of the world. If you want to live in a safe country, go to Singapore. But, of course, if your teenagers get in trouble, they may get swatted in the back seat, and that would be, of course, unthinkable and unbiblical. But you know, folks, listen. Let this week be a week of window into your life, into a resourceful and powerful global Christian movement that has insights to be gained, not just a place to go and give. At this stage, we may have more to get than to give. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, as just one voice in this conference. I pray that some of these things will stick in our hearts. Help us not to forget them. Help us to realize that we're out to kill 50 million people in China with the backing of our government, without the criticism of the churches, our marvelous Christian attorneys and congressmen and focus on the family experts are busy, busy doing something else while our country wields an incredible, evil, monstrous power in all of the earth today. Father, help us to be a resource and not an obstacle to your global cause. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Bye.