Frontier Ventures and William Carey International University Respond to *World* Magazine Article

Dear Friends & Colleagues,

In light of a recent article published in *World* Magazine (www.world.wng.org), we feel reluctantly compelled to respond with several corrections. While we cannot address every detail, the points we do correct should serve, we hope, to shed some light on the level of quality of information being presented by the article.

Before beginning, we want to make it clear that we cannot address details related to the property that could jeopardize future sales negotiations, or address any litigation or lawsuits, for reasons explained many times to date, and again below.

**Statement**

PASADENA, Calif.— The recent *World* Magazine article regarding the proposed sale of our long-time campus is a regrettable mischaracterization of the situation that compels us to offer some correction and clarity.

While we acknowledge that some disagree with the course of action we are pursuing, and do not question their sincerity, the suggestion that we have ignored concerns and have questionable motives is simply unwarranted and untrue.

Indeed, most people closely associated with Frontier Ventures and WCIU support what we are doing and see it, as we do, not as a dismissal of all that has gone before, but as building on that great heritage.

Our founding vision remains unchanged, but the way in which we pursue its fulfillment has to change, just as the world in which we live has changed over the last 40 years.

Change is never easy, however. We recognize that. It requires us to think and pray hard, to discern what are enduring principles and what are evolving practices.

The leadership of Frontier Ventures and WCIU has sought to do that over the past several years. The decision to follow our current path has not been taken lightly or quickly.

Through many hours of prayer, discussion and deliberation, and seeking the counsel of others, we believe that selling our property is the best way ahead—not just operationally, but also strategically.

While the sale would relieve us of significant financial burdens that restrain our efforts, it would also facilitate a decentralized future better suited to the modern and future world.

Before addressing some specifics in the *World* Magazine article, three main points need to be re-emphasized:

1. **Selling the campus is not a departure from our founding vision.**
   
   This is an operational shift, not a strategic one. Our vision remains unchanged: giving all that we have to the cause of the unreached and seeing Jesus proclaimed to the ends of the earth. In fact, the same kind of sacrificial commitment that birthed the U.S. Center for World Missions fuels our willingness to make uncomfortable
changes to remain true to that vision. Additionally, we plan to retain a presence on the campus, keeping roots here even as we plant works in other places.

2. **Selling the campus is not primarily about cost-cutting.**

The cost of doing business and living in Southern California has increasingly become a challenge for many, but the sale is not so much about saving money as wise stewardship. We can better use the money from a sale to further our work in a decentralized way.

3. **Selling the campus is not an issue to most people.**

Only a small number of people have criticized this course of action. Some who had questions have come to support our plan, having considered all the facts. Among those who are behind the sale are founding members of both boards, staff and Dr. Winter’s widow. So, to suggest that the “old guard” has been ignored is inaccurate. We have attempted to hear and be sensitive to concerns, while still meeting our responsibility to pursue the course of action we believe ultimately to be best.

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**Our Response to Key Points in the World Magazine Article**

*World Magazine* says that at FV and WCIU … *his (Dr. Ralph Winter’s) vision is no longer welcome*… It goes on, *Now, most of the missions-related activity is gone. FV/WCIU (“Frontier Ventures” is the “rebranding” name for USWM) derives revenue from renting buildings to several schools and churches and renting houses to people searching on Craigslist for vacancies. The tenants have brought new problems that tarnish the reputation of what was a great institution.*

In fact: This is a misrepresentation of what is going on and what has gone on. Our vision is to see movements to Jesus among all nations, and our mission remains focused on catalyzing new breakthroughs. FV’s plans are all focused on growth. WCIU’s plans are all focused on growth.

The U.S. Center for World Missions was rebranded as Frontier Ventures to reflect the change in world mission strategy from a primarily western-orchestrated, centralized sending model based in North America to a global strategy closer to the frontlines of missions ministry. It was a precursor to eventually moving to a decentralized, multi-location model.

In terms of the on-campus tenants, the campus is rented to Providence Christian School, Epicenter Church (with a huge vision for reaching the unreached), Judson Christian School, Davar Church, Sovereign Grace Church, Harvest Rock Church offices (another globally focused ministry), and The School of Supernatural Ministry (also focused on reaching the unreached). There is one school not associated with Christian ministry (Excelsior, whose 65 students who also live on campus) and 45 students from LA Music College who live on campus, but attend class downtown.

All of the FV missionaries assigned to Pasadena live in WCIU-subsidized housing (with the exception of two families who live near the wives’ place of employment). Many FV and WCIU employees also live in WCIU housing, and those three categories of employee take precedence in obtaining housing. We also offer housing to employees of the ministry collaborators listed above at a slightly reduced rate. If other housing is available, we open it up to the community for rentals, as has been WCIU’s practice from the beginning. Nothing has changed regarding rental use.

*World Magazine* says, *We’ve learned about problems involving three charter or private schools—Orion, Celerity, and Excelsior—that rented classroom buildings. Orion was dissatisfied with the condition of its building and left. The Pasadena Fire Department, citing safety concerns, told Celerity it had to move. Excelsior still*
occupies parts of two buildings: Few of the students are Christians, and the school administration has stifled attempts by evangelicals to invite the students to movie nights and other outreach events.

Orion was not dissatisfied with the conditions of the building; in fact, they loved the building they used. However, in the midst of a lease renewal, we discovered that the building was not coded for students under the age of 18, and we could not find them appropriate space in time for the upcoming school year. They needed to move because we could not move them on campus in time for the start of school.

Celerity had too many students for the space they were renting. While our architect believed the space could be used for elementary school children, the Fire Marshall ruled otherwise, and thus Celerity was forced to leave.

Excelsior, like every school, has policies by which they govern. While we would of course wish to see more opportunity for the sharing of faith, we respect their governance decisions.

World Magazine says, WCIU's Mott Auditorium, which with a capacity of 4,000 is the largest auditorium in Pasadena, is closed most of the time, in part because its heavy doors are difficult to open from the inside. That would be dangerous in case of emergencies, but COO Kerry Jones says it would cost $100,000 to replace them.

In fact: Mott hasn't held 4,000 for a long time. The cost of replacing doors in Mott is closer to $55,000. Our position is that whoever purchases the campus might have different uses for Mott, and it would be to their benefit to replace the doors in the manner that best suits their plans.

World Magazine says, When WORLD gave President Higgins a list of charges by Clancy and Rios, he commented, "Yes. In each case we have sought to meet with staff and employees to solve these issues. We have made extensive changes in our entire HR department to prevent future problems. I have met personally with one of our WCIU staff, on several occasions, to hear her side of things."

In fact: This quote from Kevin Higgins is partially correct, but incorrect in an important point: he has met with many staff, and many non-staff — and in fact with anyone willing to meet and talk. The accurate point is that there is one member of the university staff who has voiced serious concerns about the sale, with whom Higgins has met several times.

World Magazine says, FV/WCIU LEADERS and their critics agree the campus has become run-down. They disagree on why that has happened: FV/WCIU executives say the problems show a central campus is no longer useful and they should sell it. Some say the cost of living in Pasadena makes it hard for missionaries to live there. Save the Campus says the problem is not the property but mismanagement of it—and executives emphasizing good stewardship and open accountability could make it bloom once more.

In fact: We have never said a central campus is no longer useful. Indeed, we have said repeatedly that we intend to keep a footprint here for the same purposes that have always shaped our organizations. We also see the advantage of many similar hubs of collaboration globally: we plan to bloom in many places. Thus, we do not need the same size property.

More generally in regard to management, we have had full audits for both FV and WCIU since the early 1990s. We have been part of the IFMA, EFMA (now merged into Missio-Nexus) since the 1980s.

World Magazine says, “It's almost like [FV/WCIU] deliberately wants to atrophy this campus to the point where they have to sell it,” said David Farrow, a retired U.S. Air Force colonel who in 2016 tried to bring the headquarters of the missionary organization Iris Global to the Pasadena campus. Farrow said FV/WCIU board members during meetings said the campus had $28 million in deferred maintenance. (Asked about that figure,
FV/WCIU responded, “This type of detail will factor in to all discussions with potential buyers and is not being released publicly.”

In fact: Mr. Farrow is not in a position to know details about the campus. IRIS is here, actually, with some students and some leaders. The idea to bring IRIS headquarters here was part of Mr. Farrow’s hope, but the decision was that of the leaders of IRIS.

World Magazine says, Former employee Clancy, now a leader of Save the Campus, has concrete predictions and objections: “They will sell the campus (unless we can stop them through litigation) and this time around have $55 million dollars. When they sell the other 90 houses, they will earn another $45 million dollars. That will be $100 million dollars at their disposal to run their ministries. These ministries will mostly be research projects. … They are not guaranteeing that ministry will continue, they are guaranteeing that they will have an income.”

In fact: The suggestion that our future ministry will be “research projects” is simply not true, as we have stated publicly many times. Our proposed projects and ministries include entirely new types of training and equipping not only for Western-based missionaries, but for men and women sent from the growing and vibrant churches of the majority world; new publishing efforts emphasizing the best new thinking in mission; WCIU’s MA degree in a dozen of the world’s major languages; new models of mission support; new models and examples of mission communities collaborating for holistic formation and equipping in the context of doing ministry together, and more.

As to the property details, we cannot discuss these in public, for reasons we have stated repeatedly. This includes what portions might be for sale, and amounts being offered. Suffice it to say, the details here are inaccurate. The specifics mentioned do not match what was being discussed during a period of time in which we were having non-binding discussions about details with one party, Moreover, our discussions with that party ended before the article went to print, with that information made available to World Magazine and Save the Campus members. We have again invited potential parties to discuss their interest with us. We do not know yet what might come to us for consideration. Thus, there is currently no specific offer in discussion. So, any mention of houses and amounts is without foundation.

World Magazine says, Given the suspicion among critics of the planned sale that the land will go to commercial interests, WORLD repeatedly asked FV/WCIU leaders if they would allay that concern. At the close of our research WORLD offered FV/WCIU leaders “one more opportunity to make a clear and unequivocal statement: ‘We will only sell the campus to an evangelical organization that pledges to use it for ministry purposes consistent with the vision that underlay its purchase 40 years ago.’” We asked for a “yes” or “no.”

In response, WCIU President Higgins listed three elements FV/WCIU would use in evaluating prospective buyers: “One is certainly the pricing, though that has never been the first or primary way we have triaged our choices. Second is to find a buyer that shares as closely as possible the values and purposes we have for ministry. And the third is to minimize the disruption” to any FV/WCIU personnel who would remain in Pasadena.

In fact: The World-crafted statement was an attempt to put words into our mouth and dictate a limited response. This is not a courtroom drama, and that is not how good journalism should work. We stand by and will adhere to
the godly principles we have been guided by in this process, and will continue to use in evaluating prospective buyers.

To read the *World* magazine report in its entirety, go to: https://world.wng.org/2018/02/dueling_visions_gnawing_suspicions

For your further help in understanding the situation, here are some frequently asked questions we have answered previously.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

Why are you selling?

While our vision remains unchanged, the ways in which we can work toward fulfilling it have changed significantly over the last 40 years. With globalization, advances in technology, and more, we no longer need to rely on just one centralized location of this kind—indeed, we will be able to achieve more by moving to a decentralized model. We also intend to retain a portion of the property.

Does this mean you will become a virtual organization?

No. What we envision is not a dispersed group of individuals working online, but a multiplication of collaboration points. These will be made up of many, smaller groups of WCIU and FV members living in proximity, sharing the same values and vision, and cooperating with other pioneering organizations and leaders to reach the unreached.

Does this mean you are leaving Pasadena?

No. While some staff and some functions of FV will relocate, a number of FV personnel and programs will remain. In addition, WCIU will retain its main center of operations for academics in our current location for the foreseeable future.

What about the money?

There will be some income from the portion of the property we intend to retain, which we will continue to rent out to staff and others, including collaborating organizations. We will invest income from what is sold, managing it to balance liquidity and long-term security, and to add an additional income stream to be used for accomplishing our mission and strategies.

Is WCIU closing?

No. We are not closing; far from it, we are expanding.

Who are the people criticizing this decision?

Within our organizations, there are members who differ as to their opinions, certainly, though the majority have also expressed their loyalty to the leadership and their willingness to follow this course. The most vocal critics outside the community include some former staff, some formerly involved with Dr. Winter who left after disagreeing with him, and some who still work for the university. These critics not only disagree with the strategy, they have also called for our boards and leadership to resign, and have stated their intent to replace us with their own people (who, it should be noted, largely lack field experience or experience in leading mission organizations).

What would the critics do with the property?

They say they would bring back many of the organizations who used to be based here (leaving due to the high costs of living and working in Southern California), and that they would invest in a new way of doing high school
education. Relative to our vision of reaching the unreached, we are not aware of any innovative approaches in their plans.

**Why does WCIU and FV respond to some of the criticisms without a lot of detail?**

There are two reasons. Related to the actual details of the sale (amounts, which portions of property, who the buyers might be) we are, naturally, not at liberty to share information due to confidentiality agreements that are signed by buyers, sellers, and real estate agents in this type of transaction. Nor are we able to reply to some of the claims about personnel and how we treat our people, largely due to the fact that our critics have elected to address these issues through litigation. This means that we cannot comment on ongoing cases. Moreover, in cases that do not involve litigation, we prefer to address these issues directly with the people involved, and not in the public square.

**What would Dr. Winter do?**

Some form of this question is often asked. There are a number of people on both FV and WCUI boards who have been here since the beginning or near the beginning of this endeavor, and who worked closely with Dr. Winter. A number have expressed their support for the decisions we have taken, and are convinced he would encourage these steps. Some have expressed disagreement, but are not leaving the organization. Dr. Winter’s widow is supportive.

**Some critics have said the boards are planning to use funds for their own pet projects, and even their own retirement funds. How do you respond?**

The proposed use of funds is focused entirely on strategic directions for expanding our ability to best serve the mission movement globally in reaching the remaining unreached. This is not a pet project, but our founding and enduring vision. None of the funds are being used for anyone’s personal benefit, retirement or otherwise.

Respectfully,

Kevin Higgins
President, WCIU

Francis Patt
General Director, Frontier Ventures