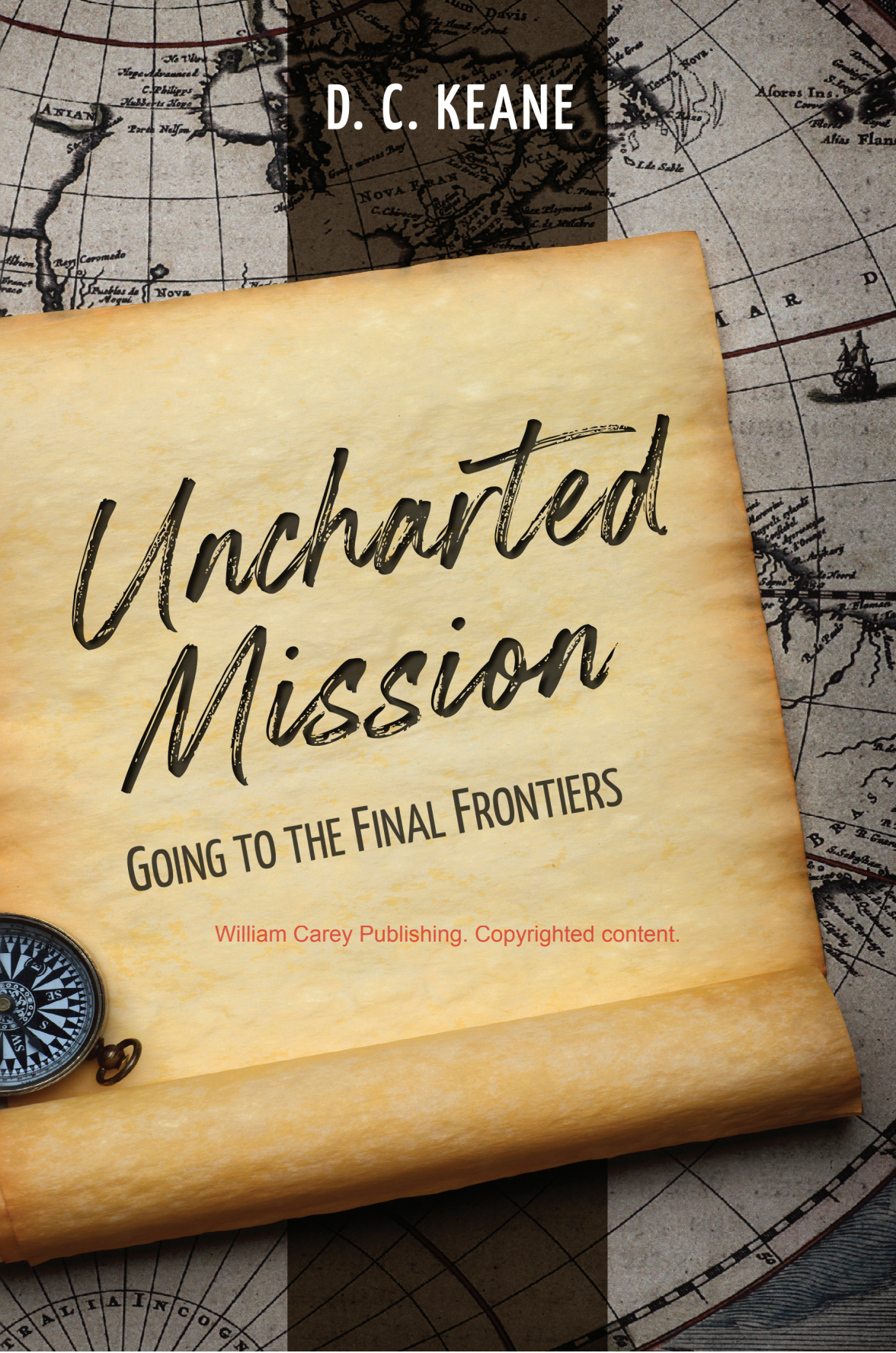


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Uncharted Mission: Going to the Final Frontiers

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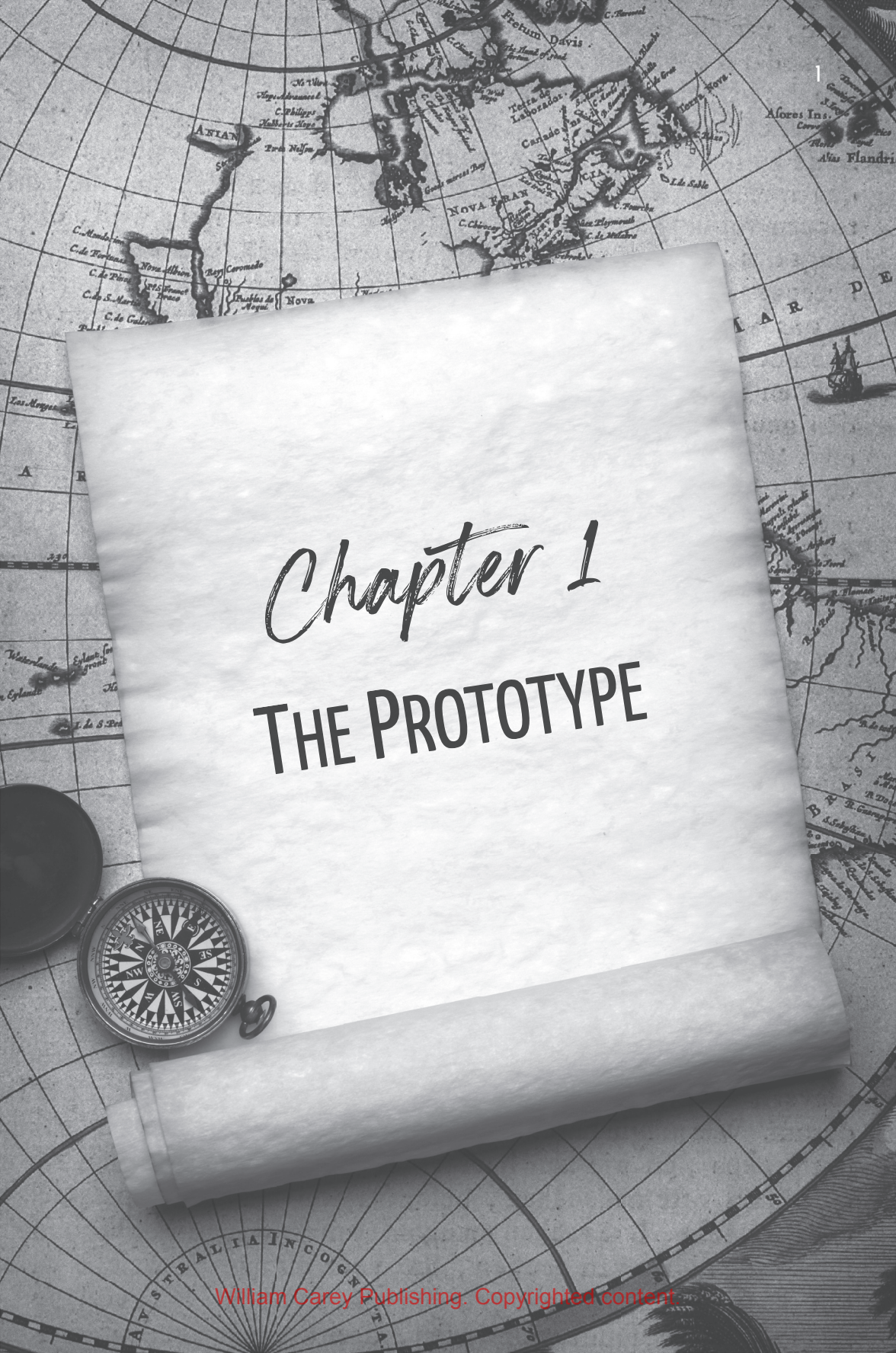
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Chapter 1

The Prototype

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"You're the most rebellious candidates I've ever met!" It wasn't quite the welcome they'd hoped for as they left the gate in North Africa after thirty-two hours of travel through four airports. Of course, they were beginning to feel the enormity of what they were trying to do, but being called rebellious before they even got into town? The undertaking was going to be harder than they'd thought!

Becky helped her father start the US Center for World Mission (USCWM) and William Carey International University in 1977. Tim began his work with USWCM in 1978 and later that year Tim and Becky were married. They attended the student track at the 1980 World Consultation on Frontier Missions (better known as Edinburgh '80). It was there they realized, amidst all the inspiring talks about "unreached peoples" and mobilizing for a new frontier mission advance, that the existing mission agencies weren't set up to send a new wave of workers to the Muslim world.

Rebellious?

Greg Livingstone, the North American Director of North Africa Mission (NAM), had sent the group's field director, Wendell Evans, to pick them up at the airport. Tim asked Wendell what he thought they were rebelling against. "Well, you've joined North Africa Mission, but you skipped our candidate school, you skipped two years of language learning in France, you skipped—"

"Whoa!" Tim interrupted. "We haven't joined North Africa Mission!"

The confusion was understandable. They'd spoken with Livingstone back in Pasadena, California, but they had told him they wouldn't join the mission because they didn't have time for the three-year candidate process. Livingstone had said he would "take care of it," so they signed a mostly blank piece of paper with the NAM logo on it. When Liz, the NAM candidate secretary, had called the following week, she said, "We received your preliminary application. There isn't much information on it, but we can schedule you for candidate school in the next year or two."

That prompted Tim's first apology. "I'm so sorry, Liz. There's been some kind of misunderstanding. We're leaving for North Africa next week."

Now they were in Wendell's car, in North Africa, feeling another pang of confusion and another apology coming. "Wendell, we're so sorry. We have such high regard for you and the work that's been done, and we're so sorry for the miscommunication. We certainly don't want to be rebellious."

Tim offered, "How about if we write out our heart and our vision for unreached non-Arab tribal peoples and explain that neither you nor NAM are responsible for us. And we'll submit a report to you once a month telling you what we've been doing."

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"That sounds reasonable," Wendell said. (Later, he showed those monthly reports to the NAM missionaries under his care and said, "Look, these guys aren't even with NAM, and they submit reports to me. Where are your reports?") Wendell and his wife became Tim and Becky's good friends.

Tim and Becky weren't rebelling—they were protesting. The regular mission efforts of the church worldwide were leaving large populations of people without access to the gospel of Christ. A new kind of sending was needed for a new kind of mission: frontier missions.

They knew regular missions well. They'd both grown up in Latin America, children of missionaries. Tim, from Argentina, had witnessed his father's good work with the Argentinian church. But Tim wasn't interested in following that path—pastoring the already convinced.

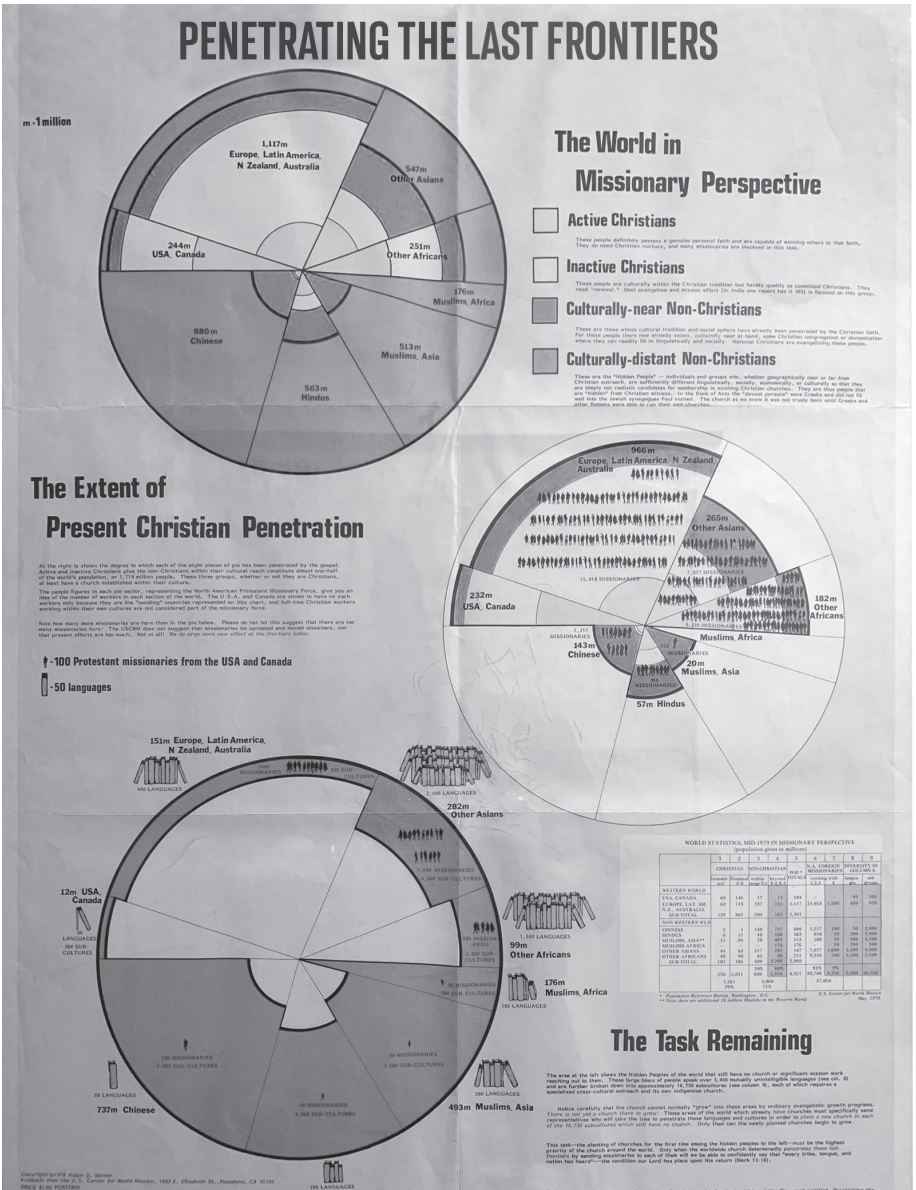
Similarly, Becky had grown up in Guatemala. Her father helped create Theological Education by Extension (TEE)[6] for the church there. It quickly spread beyond Guatemala. But when her dad, Dr. Ralph Winter, moved to Pasadena to teach at Fuller Seminary, he realized there were large swaths of the earth with no witnesses to Christ. He left Fuller Seminary to start USCWM.

Tim had just finished a degree in New Testament Studies at Western Conservative Baptist Seminary in Portland, Oregon, when he heard a presentation by Ralph Winter about "megaspheres." It was a way of seeing the world religio-culturally that exposed places like the Muslim world without adequate access to the gospel. Until then, Tim had no intention of going into ministry. He didn't want to become a "professional Christian." But when he heard Winter, something in the presentation called to him.

It also got the attention of his parents, Norm and Annabeth. Tim helped load their belongings into a truck and move them to Pasadena to join Winter. Along the way, his mom extolled the virtues of Winter's daughter, Becky.

The conversation in Becky's home often centered on "megaspheres." However, she didn't fully understand until she and her sister went to the six-week Summer Institute of International Studies (SIIS), which their father organized at Wheaton College in 1974. The formal presentations clarified the difference between "inter-church aid," like the work Becky's parents did in Guatemala, and the need for whole new pioneering efforts into areas that were being overlooked. Becky returned to Pasadena and school at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech). A small group of Caltech students who had gone to Wheaton together for the SIIS gathered eight hundred students from around Southern California for a Student Conference on World Evangelization (SCOWE). They shared what they'd learned about "hidden peoples" who had no access to the good news of Jesus. The SCOWE was held annually for several years.

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The Blue Pie Chart that changed the world, showing where the gospel is not yet available to people.

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Becky took the data her father was gathering and, with his help, created a poster titled "Penetrating the Last Frontiers." Those were the days before Microsoft Office. She had to draw circles by hand, cut out and wax down typed paragraphs, and rub on headlines and little figures to represent workers in each area. The poster was designed to clearly show, in bright blue, the peoples who had no believers or churches in their own culture. With very few mission workers, these groups had little opportunity to hear of Christ. When she was done, it was as clear as day: the place with the least access to the gospel was North Africa. The poster became popularly known as the "blue pie chart." It had a clarifying effect for people considering mission involvement. It was mailed out to USCWM donors, handed out at churches, posted on dorm room walls, and drawn on restaurant napkins. Mission leaders who'd been preaching, "Missionary, come home!" were stunned to see that vast blocks of humanity were still beyond the reach of any church or missionary.

Tim and Becky married a year after Tim moved to Pasadena. They committed themselves to the new goal: "A church for every people group." In the fall of 1980, they went to Scotland to take part in the World Consultation on Frontier Missions. Its predecessor, the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, had resulted in the World Council of Churches (WCC), but by 1975 some saw the WCC as distracted from the pioneering missionary task. Arthur Glasser, then editor of the journal *Missiology*, wrote, "Indeed, because Nairobi 1975 revealed the WCC's preoccupation with a long and valid agenda of churchly concerns, the strategic importance of this proposal [for new efforts to focus on frontier missions] has been immeasurably heightened."[7]

Dr. Winter's talk at Edinburgh '80 began with the words of Billy Graham from Graham's address at the 1974 Lausanne Conference on World Evangelization in Switzerland: "While some people can be evangelized by their neighbors, others and greater multitudes are cut off from their Christian neighbors by deep linguistic and political chasms. They will never be reached by near-neighbor evangelism, that is to say, normal evangelism. To build our evangelistic policies on near-neighbor evangelism alone is thus to shut out at least a billion people from any possibility of knowing the Savior."

Tim discovered the truth of that statement in North Africa, but he wasn't building his ministry on the words of Billy Graham. He wanted to build on the word of God. He'd come to understand Winter's argument from the Bible. "I have been impressed by the continuity of mission vision throughout the entire Bible," Winter said at the conference. As an illustration, he spoke of a recent interaction at a Christian convention between someone from the new USCWM and a representative from an unnamed organization that focused

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