

# Preface

**I**ncluded in God's many gifts to his Church are those persons who could loosely be called "saints"—faithful servants of his Son Jesus from every age and culture whose witness still challenges us to faithfulness today.

Many of these witnesses—most, perhaps—lived under unimaginable hardships. Many faced persecution, often from more "politically correct" members of the very Christian Church that should have loved and honoured them.

Through it all they stood fast, drawing their strength from the One who is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). Through knowing their stories we can be encouraged in our own journeys.

Several years ago *Fellowship Magazine*, a publication serving the renewal and reform movement within The United Church of Canada, invited Dr. Victor Shepherd to write a column called "Heritage." It was to be a concise portrait of men and women of faith, past and present, whose lives were perhaps unknown to many readers. The resulting series of articles became one of the best-read and most appreciated columns in the magazine. We are delighted that Dr. Shepherd has decided to release in book form the articles that have appeared to date. We are certain the stories contained in *So Great a Cloud of Witnesses* will be an encouragement to you, as will future volumes in this series.

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