

Endorsements

"Finally, a book that frames the evangelist within the whole Christian story and the holistic mission of the church. This is the book I will give to people in my church when they want to know how we can recover a vision for telling and living the Christian story in a postmodern city."

Tim Dickau, DMin
Pastor, adjunct professor, author
British Columbia, Canada

"Finally. A book...I can give to people in my church as an inspiration to participate with God in mission, and as a resource with tools to actually do it. What's more, I can give it to pastors and leaders across the country, because it is theologically sound, and challenges our current paradigms."

Cam Roxburgh, DMin
Senior pastor, national director (Forge Canada)
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"Set within the larger framework of God's unfolding story of redemption, Grant articulates what it means for us to live credibly and speak seamlessly about the good news of Jesus. This book is a crucial resource for the church in these turbulent times."

Daron Boyd Brown
Senior pastor, author
Tennessee, USA

"Zweigle has given us a significant contribution to the consideration of evangelism in the contemporary context that is both practical and theologically reflective. I highly recommend this book to all who are interested in being and proclaiming the gospel in a postmodern world."

Ron Benefiel, PhD
Dean, Point Loma Nazarene University
California, USA

"Zweigle's passion...is contagious. This insightful book will instill in anyone a deeper desire to worship God and invite others do the same."

Dick Eugenio, PhD
Associate pastor, assistant professor, author
Manila, Philippines

"For those trained in transactional evangelism strategies that seem increasingly out of place in a post-Christian world, Zweigle's real-life examples and suggestions are life-giving and encouraging. I will ask every pastor under my oversight to spend time with this book."

Jeren Rowell, DMin
Nazarene district superintendent, author
Kansas, USA

"*Worship, Wonder, and Way* is written with a balanced combination of academic training, extensive pastoral experience, and practical application. Zweigle mixes a blend of proven Wesleyan principles with an understanding of contemporary culture. This book will challenge you to a new adventure of missional living and discipleship journey!"

David A. Busic, DD
Nazarene general superintendent, author
Kansas, USA

"For anyone wondering what a healthy Christian witness can look like, how it can function, or the possibilities it can embody in a post-Christian culture, let the hope and faithfulness found in this book be your guide."

Timothy R. Gaines, PhD
Co-pastor, co-author
California, USA

"If you have ever wrestled with the idea of evangelism, this is the book for you. Grant Zweigle challenges the inadequate conceptions of this vital aspect of the kingdom of God. This wonderful resource will relieve you of unnecessary guilt and empower you for the churchly task of evangelism."

Jesse C. Middendorf, DMin
Executive director, Center for Pastoral Leadership
Nazarene Theological Seminary, Missouri, USA

"Grant Zweigle is a passionate and practical witness of Jesus. This book is a delightful read for anyone with an interest in the relevance of methods and practices of evangelism."

Eugénio Duarte, MBA, MA, DD
Nazarene general superintendent
Kansas, USA

"Grant Zweigle's book is an engaging and powerful resource, inviting the church to rediscover and rekindle a passion for evangelism in accordance with the Word of God. This book will revolutionize the way we have understood evangelism and will offer a new and much-needed perspective for the accomplishment of the call to make Christlike disciples in the twenty-first century".

Fili Chambo, PhD
Regional director, Church of the Nazarene
Johannesburg, South Africa

"Grant takes the fear out of evangelism. His approach invites all believers into the journey of evangelism. I highly recommend this book to all believers who are serious about their call to share Christ."

Scott Rainey, DMin
CIS Field strategy coordinator, former Nazarene pastor
Kyiv, Ukraine

"Grant Zweigle offers his readers a reminder of what it means to testify. If you are uncertain about evangelism, read on! I was encouraged, challenged, and equipped as I read, and you will be too."

Olivia Metcalf
University chaplain, author, public speaker
Idaho, USA

"Has evangelism gone out of style? Grant Zweigle takes us on a thoughtful journey where he explains the current landscape. No, evangelism hasn't gone out of style; it just may look different! Zweigle provides excellent handles on the ways in which each of us can thoughtfully be engaged in sharing Christ with those we encounter. This is an important read for everyone growing as faithful disciples."

Carla Sunberg, PhD
NTS president, professor, author
Missouri, USA

"Zweigle's stories of transformation illustrate the heart of the gospel. He provides a cross-cultural approach to witness... This book is a must-read for church leaders...in a diverse and changing world."

Mark A. Maddix, PhD
Dean, professor (Northwest Nazarene University)
Idaho, USA

Worship, Wonder, and Way

Reimagining Evangelism
as Missional Practice



Grant Zweigle



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Mission as Witness

Acts 1:8: But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Driving home on a sunny day in beautiful Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, I stopped at a traffic light and noticed a sign tacked to a telephone pole just outside the passenger side window. It said: “Witnesses needed.” I leaned over the empty seat to get a closer look and read that there had been an accident at that very intersection. It gave the date and time of the accident and asked for anyone who had seen the accident to call the phone number listed on the sign. It is such a simple request: *Witnesses needed*. But it’s a weighty request as well. Without a witness, the victim’s ability to resolve the claim with the insurance company is significantly diminished. Without a witness, the circumstances surrounding that event will never be fully revealed. Without a witness, the truth of what occurred at that intersection will never be known.

The operation of our whole legal system hinges on the willingness of credible witnesses to report what they have seen and heard. A witness often appears in the courtroom as part of a trial. “This witness is in every way one of the people, but...is placed on the stand because of two credentials: the witness has seen something [that is of importance to the outcome of the trial], and the

witness is willing to tell the truth about it—the whole truth and nothing but the truth.”¹

But not every act of witness takes place in the courtroom. Every day we tell truthful stories to one another, bearing witness to things we’ve seen, heard, felt, learned, and experienced. We bear witness to truth in a variety of ways. Some people are natural storytellers who take you on a journey in their retellings. Others prefer to speak directly and get straight to the point.

A good novelist writes stories that witness to the truth of human experience through the use of fictional characters. A director instructs actors to perform in such a way that truthfully bears witness to a story written by another. A symphony bears witness to a piece of music by performing it truthfully before an audience—interpreting, but not deviating too far from the notes originally penned by the composer. Artists bear witness to the full scope of human experience through the media of paint or pencil, canvas or computer, stone or clay. Historians bear witness to the past by reconstructing events into a truthful timeline, discerning meaning by connecting pieces from the past. Scientists bear witness to the validity of their experiments by publishing their research in peer-reviewed scholarly journals.

What we know about life in this world, how we understand the past and present, and even what we expect of the future is constructed largely on the basis of witnesses. As a people, we are constantly adding to our understanding of the world we live in through the witness of those who are willing to tell the truth about a whole range of human experiences. So, too, is our knowledge of God based on witnesses who are willing to speak truthfully about the God who comes near, entering human history in both powerful and humble ways.

The people of ancient Israel—the sons and daughters of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—are the first to bear witness to the God we’ve come to know through the Bible as *YHWHY*, the LORD, Creator of the heavens and the earth. They bear witness to the truth

that the God who creates is also a God who calls and makes covenant promises. The LORD is a God who blesses and a God who sends. This God also liberates, rescues, saves, and redeems. The children of Israel personally experience the redeeming and liberating power of the LORD in the Exodus event. They write songs that truthfully sing the story of how God delivered them from the powers of Egypt. They tell this story to their children, and instruct them to pass it on to their children. It is important to the Israelites that every generation bear witness to the next generation of how the LORD delivered them from bondage and brought them into the promised land.

The tabernacle in the wilderness and, later, the temple in Jerusalem bear witness to the wondrous—and, at times, dangerous—presence of the LORD among the people. The law of Moses organizes the life of Israel in such a way that it bears witness to a way of living in the world that expresses the holiness, mercy, and justice of the LORD. And through the witness of prophets, priests, and kings, the word and way of the LORD are made known to the people of Israel and the nations. When the people fail to bear witness to the saving deeds of the LORD, they lose their identity as a people and are sent into exile, where they remember who they are and *whose* they are. Also in exile, the longing is cultivated for a faithful and righteous king to come and make Zion a place of healing for the nations.

Israel's vocation at this time, as a people chosen by God, is to bear witness to the truth of God among all the nations of the earth. "You are my witnesses," declares the LORD in both Isaiah 43:10 and 43:12, "that I am God;" and in 43:13, "Yes, and from ancient days I am he."

When Moses goes up Mount Sinai, the LORD says to him:



If you were to name a person in the Old Testament who witnesses God's saving, rescuing, or healing power, whom would you choose? Why? What makes this person a credible witness?

This is what you are to say to the descendants of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: “You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

Exodus 19:3b-6a

Reflecting on this scripture, Michael Goheen writes: “It is hard to overestimate the importance of these words for understanding the role and identity of Israel.”² Goheen continues:

Israel is to embody God’s creational intention for all humanity for the sake of the world, living in such a way as to draw the nations into covenant with God. Or, to use the later language of Isaiah, Israel is called to be ‘a light to the nations’ (Isa. 42:6 NASB).³

There is no question that when Jesus comes preaching and teaching in Galilee, he understands his mission as an extension of and fulfillment of Israel’s missionary vocation. “I am the light of the world,” Jesus says in John 8:12, “Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” Israel is called to be a light to the nations. Jesus is the light of the world.

In Revelation 1:5, John calls Jesus “the faithful witness.” Israel’s witness is imperfect. Jesus’s witness is perfect. The writer of Hebrews puts it this way:

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

Hebrews 1:1-3a

Jesus is the image of the invisible God. Jesus truly and fully embodies God’s creational intent for every person. Through his life,

death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus witnesses to the presence and reality of the kingdom of God that is now open to everyone who will believe, enter, and receive. Jesus announces and embodies the good news that, through repentance and faith in him, all people everywhere are set free from the powers of darkness and death; forgiven from the guilt and healed from the scourge of sin; and welcomed as children into the eternal-life-giving, loving fellowship of Father, Son, and Spirit. And to all of this, the Holy Spirit bears witness in the life of believers.

This is a story that needs to be told. It is a story that is for the life of the world. Jesus is the firstfruits of the new creation that is coming, the One who will reconcile the whole creation to God the Creator. The Christian church today is called to bear truthful witness to this story. The church bears witness to the wonderful truth that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel as well as the true Lord of the rest of the world; that, in Jesus, the reign of God has come near and is open and available to everyone who would receive; that the Creator God has reached into the world through the Son and the Spirit to enfold all people into God's rescuing, redeeming, and reconciling embrace, where we find life. Christians are sent to bear witness to their experience of and participation in the kingdom of God. The shorthand for this news is the gospel. Christians are a people whose life together in the world bears witness to the gospel.

Once upon a time, I was taught that the gospel was a set of logical propositions about God, humanity, sin, and salvation. I believed that witnessing to the gospel meant presenting these propositions in such a way that would convince a person to give assent to these facts by praying something that was called a "sinner's prayer." The problem with this approach is that this is not the way the Bible talks about the gospel. In its Old Testament us-



In what ways does Jesus fulfill Israel's calling to be a witness to the nations? How is Jesus's witness different from Israel's witness?

age, the word *gospel* was used for the good news that the reign of God—which sets captives free, brings exiles home, reconciles estranged peoples, and renews the whole creation—has come near. In the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the gospel is the good news that the reign of God that the Old Testament prophets spoke about has finally arrived—in the person and work of Jesus Christ. The Gospels are the gospel!

According to Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:3-5, the gospel message includes the news “that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas [Peter], and then to the Twelve.” But that is not the extent of it. Paul goes on to include in his telling of the gospel the good news that Jesus Christ now reigns as King, and will one day hand over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority, and power, including the power of death. The gospel, therefore, tells the whole story of Jesus and the rescuing, redeeming, and reconciling implications of his life, death, resurrection, ascension and imminent return for all people and all creation.

To bear witness to Jesus in our world today is to represent the whole story of Jesus for our whole world today. It is to speak and live the truth and nothing but the truth—the whole truth—about Jesus. This includes our witness to Jesus’s ministry as a prophet greater than Moses, who graciously restores our knowledge of God’s will for human life.⁴ Jesus is the greatest teacher who ever lived. For example, in what has come to be known as the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus presents a compelling vision for a whole and integrated life. But it is also Jesus’s prophetic ministry that calls us to consider the ways we fall short of the righteousness of the kingdom of God and our need for forgiveness and reconciliation and re-creation, the new birth made possibly by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

The whole truth about Jesus includes witnessing to Jesus as our great high priest. On the cross, Jesus took our sin upon him-

self, making full atonement for human sin. Through Christ, our priest, “we are each assured of the pardon of our sin, a pardon that initiates our restored relationship with God and that maintains us in that relationship.”⁵

We live in a world that is vandalized by sin on a daily basis. We participate in this vandalism both willingly and unwillingly, burdening ourselves with guilt. And we are vandalized by the sin of others, which fills us with shame. Christ our priest atones for the guilt of sin and removes our shame, reconciling us with God and one another.

The whole truth about Jesus includes witnessing to Jesus as King, the Shepherd-King with healing in his wings, who makes all things new, restoring the image of God to those who have been reinstated in his favor and reigning at God’s right hand until all things have been reconciled to him.⁶ This includes the hope of Revelation 11:15, the day when “the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever.” This is good news for the life of the world because it means the end of injustice, tyranny, pain, oppression, evil, sin, and death. Jesus is the King the world longs for, the King the whole creation groans for. Jesus is the one who makes all things new.

Who will do this? Who will bear witness to this good news? Who will tell the truth, the whole truth, about Jesus and the reign of God? “You, church!” Jesus says in Acts 1:8. We will be Jesus’s witnesses.

This, then, is our vocation, the mission of the Christian church, our mission of witness. But it is more than just a vocation, more than just a job, more than a task, more than a mission we are obligated to fulfill. Witness describes our very identity. Witness is



What is happening in the world today that causes you the most concern? What is happening in your life today that causes other people to be concerned about your words, thoughts, or actions?

who we are called and chosen to be. When Jesus says, “You will be my witnesses” in Acts 1:8, he is making a promise to his disciples, not giving them a command. And, by extension, he is making a promise to us today; we will be witnesses to Jesus Christ and the reign of God in our cities, neighborhoods, towns, and villages.

Of course, when Jesus first speaks these words to the apostles in Acts 1:8, he is speaking to those who have been physically with him from the very beginning of his public ministry, starting with John’s baptism, throughout his ministry in Galilee, right through his rejection, passion, death, and resurrection, up to the time he returns to the Father in the ascension. He is speaking to those who have personally experienced the power of the kingdom of God through his miracles: restoring sight to the blind, healing lepers, rescuing people from demonic possession, raising the dead, forgiving sinners, preaching the good news to the poor.

But we, in the Christian church, are also those who have experienced the rescuing, redeeming, liberating, reconciling, and life-giving power of the kingdom of God in Jesus Christ. We can speak truthfully about times in our lives when we experienced release from the guilt and shame of sin; about times we have experienced the grace and love of God enfolding us into the mysterious, triune life of God in wondrous ways; about times we experienced God’s help to love and serve others in ways contrary to our very nature; about how God worked in the lives of our families. For example, I can bear witness to how the LORD rescued my great-grandparents from the oppressive powers of communist Russia and delivered them safely to Canada. We witness to what we have learned and heard, and also to what we have personally experienced.

And we are not alone in our witness. The apostles are not the only witnesses to Jesus. In John 5:31-47, Jesus provides a list of other witnesses, including John the Baptist; the miracles he did; the Father, who says at Jesus’s baptism: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased”; and the Scriptures, the entire Bible, bear witness to the truth about Jesus.

When you add these witnesses to the witness of the apostles and now—two thousand years later—the witness of the entire Christian church down through the ages, it is encouraging to know that we stand today among a great cloud of witnesses! We are not the first witnesses, and we will not be the last. And we are not asked to be lone, solitary voices crying out in the wilderness. We now stand shoulder to shoulder with all God's people through the ages, around the world, and gathered together in our local congregations. Together with all our sisters and brothers, we live as witnesses to Jesus and the rescuing, redeeming, and reconciling implications of his life for every person and the whole of creation.

So it is not just each one of us as individuals who are called to witness, but all of us together, as the body of Christ, as Christians. Everyone who has been captured by this story and the good news of God's reign in the Old and New Testaments; all who have looked to Jesus and found rescue, redemption, and reconciliation; all who have been baptized and have received the Holy Spirit; all who are filled with the love of God and desire to share God's love with others immediately become a part of the community of witnesses. We are all, together, by the power of the Holy Spirit, witnesses to Jesus Christ.

For a long time I imagined the Christian witness as sort of a solitary, lonely business. When I thought of an effective witness I thought of someone like Billy Graham, a towering figure standing alone behind a solitary pulpit, preaching about Jesus while the masses looked on. I thought of a witness as a solitary woman on a street corner, handing out tracts to those passing by, pleading with people to listen. I imagined a witness as a missionary couple, saying goodbye to family and friends, getting on an airplane and flying to some far-off land to tell people about Jesus. In fact, most of the time when I thought of witnessing, I thought about activities I was supposed to do apart from the Christian church, activities I would pursue away from the community of faith. I even, for a time, believed that the main role of the church was to equip me to

be a witness and then send me out there on my own. I heard sermons that exhorted me, as an individual, to go out there and reach people for Jesus. Perhaps I mistakenly heard and understood this as an individual pursuit, or perhaps I sometimes heard misguided preaching. It certainly didn't come across to me that being a witness was designed to be a team effort.



When you think of someone witnessing, what comes to mind? Do you imagine a solitary activity, or an activity done with others?

Imagining witnessing as an individual activity, and believing that I bore an individual responsibility to witness to my friends, neighbors, co-workers, and unsaved family members often felt like a huge burden to bear. And I felt, at times, that if I wasn't individually pursuing opportunities to witness to unsaved individuals on my own, then somehow I was letting God down. I was failing. I wasn't doing what God expected me to do. I don't believe this anymore. And it is not what Acts 1:8

says.

Jesus is speaking to his community of disciples. He is speaking to the women and men who have been with him, and who will now constitute the new community called by his name. This doesn't come across in the English language, but in the Greek, all the pronouns in Acts 1:8 are plural. *You all* will receive power, Jesus tells them. The Holy Spirit will come on *you all*. And *you all* will be my witnesses. All together now!

We never witness alone. We have the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, dwelling within us. "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you," Jesus promises. *You will receive, and you will be*. These are words of gift and promise. Our vocation, our mission of witness, is a gift of the Holy Spirit.

But, like every gift of the Spirit, the gift is given to us, but it is not exclusively for us. The gift is given *to us for* the world. Our witness is to be a public witness for the life of the world. The

witness is for others; for those “in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Jesus believes that the world needs a witness. Jesus believes that the world needs to taste and see and hear and experience the good news of the kingdom of God. The world needs to taste and see and hear and experience the gospel, the good news that God’s reign in Christ has come near and is open and available for all who will turn and receive. Our vocation as a Christian congregation is, therefore, both a gift and a calling. A gift given to your church, for the life of your neighborhood.

Witnesses are needed in places like Seattle, Washington, and Vancouver, British Columbia, where I lived. Vancouver is a city in which the majority of people do not know or have forgotten the story of Jesus. A few years ago, a couple from China who were visiting professors at the University of British Columbia moved into our neighborhood and found our church. They came for our English Conversation Club and stuck around because of the warmth and hospitality of our congregation. During the English Conversation Club, the family heard about our hanging of the greens, when we decorate the sanctuary for Advent and Christmas. They showed up and asked if they could help. A woman in our church named Faye gave them the job of setting up the crèche, the manger scene. When they unpacked the figurines, they asked Faye, “Who are these people?” They did not know the story of Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the wise men, and baby Jesus.

But it is not just immigrants from China who are unfamiliar with this story. The same month that Faye shared this story with me, she also told me of an experience she had when attending a Christmas program at another church in Vancouver. A stylish Canadian woman in her early thirties sat near Faye. She leaned over and asked, “Who do those figures on the table in front of the sanctuary represent?” She was asking about the crèche. She didn’t know the story of Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the wise men, and baby Jesus either! Witnesses are needed in Vancouver.

As we consider our witness in our cities, neighborhoods, towns, and villages today, I wonder if we can imagine the geographical scope of the witness that Jesus spoke to his apostles about in Acts 1:8—in *Jerusalem, all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth*—and apply it to the people in your local context, where your church has its home. Rather than using geographical proximity, perhaps we might think of being witnesses in Jerusalem as referring to our witness among those who are closest to the story of Jesus. Already among us are those to whom we bear witness. This is our witness to the beloved children of the Christian community. Our witness as a Christian community begins in our homes, in our children's Sunday school classrooms, in our sanctuary, at the dinner table, the small group, in service to others together, and through the normal routines of family and congregational life. Our children, youth, young adults, adults, and seniors are all constituents of our witness. We witness to one another all that we have seen and heard and know about Jesus. God loves all the children of the church, young and old. The beloved children of the Christian church are the first constituents of our witness—the first to whom our witness together is directed. Our Jerusalem is one another.

Expanding this metaphor, Judea and Samaria could refer to our witness among those who once were a part of the Christian community but have disconnected from the church for one reason or another. Walter Brueggemann calls these folks “forgetters.” Forgetters are “insiders to the faith who have grown careless, weary, jaded, and cynical about the faith.”⁷ Beloved children of the community become forgetters for a variety of reasons. Sometimes there has been disagreement within the church that pushes people away. Others are unable to resolve the tough questions of faith and life and consequently disengage from the church. In North America, where Sunday worship is no longer protected as sacred time, forgetters are often those who just got too busy with

life, work, sports, kids, recreation, shopping, etc., to pay attention to God.

Brueggemann points to affluence as a major contributor to “forgetfulness” in Israel’s life in the Old Testament: “In a context of affluent prosperity, Israel would eventually forget its memory, scuttle the God of the memory, disregard the demands of that God and forfeit the joy of covenant with Yahweh.”⁸ Today only 2-3 percent of people in Vancouver are meaningfully connected to a local Christian church. Some of the 97 percent who are not connected to the church are “forgetters.” There is some Christian memory. They might show up on Easter Sunday or ask us to baptize their children or perform their weddings. Most are indifferent to the church, while others have grown judgmental of or even outright hostile toward Christians.

The Christian church is to persevere in its witness among forgetters. God has not forgotten the forgetters. Forgetters are the lost son, the lost sheep, the lost coin of Luke 15. They are precious to our Father in heaven. We must continue to bear witness to the truth about Jesus in a world that has, in many ways, intentionally sought to push the church out of public life and seeks to relegate the Christian witness to the interior, private arena of individual souls. But we cannot keep quiet about what we have seen and heard! The gospel is for the whole world, not just for church folks. The gospel is good news for forgetters.

The third constituency for our witness is outsiders. If we apply the geographical scope of the church’s witness to our local context, then “the ends of the earth” may refer to those in our cities, neighborhoods, towns, and villages who are truly outsiders to the story of Jesus. This would include those who have never received a true hearing of the story. It might include those who have never truly seen the gospel in action. It would include those whose parents never bothered to talk to them about spiritual things. It would include forgetters who have been away for so long that they have become outsiders.

In Jesus's parable of the great wedding banquet, which is all about the invitation to enter the kingdom of God, the insiders ignore the invitation to the feast. "Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full'" (Luke 14:23). God sends God's servants to find and welcome outsiders into God's presence. Many immigrants to the United States and Canada are truly outsiders to the story of Jesus and the reign of God. They view Christianity as a Western religion. They associate Christianity with the worst forms of cultural imperialism.

God loves the outsider. God loves those who don't know that the kingdom is open to them. The kingdom of God is for outsiders. Witnesses are needed among outsiders. The ends of the earth have moved next door. The Master has prepared a lavish feast and wants them to come in! Is your church a witness among outsiders? Do the immigrants, strangers, and unchurched in your neighborhood know that they are welcome in your church or at your dinner table?

It is not easy to be a witness today. But it's never been easy. In the original Greek, the word for *witness* is *martyr*. In English,

the word *martyr* refers to those who suffer or are put to death for their witness. We need to keep the words *witness* and *martyr* together so that we are not surprised by the difficulty and cost of being a witness to Jesus. But before Jesus revealed the cost, he promised his divine help in Acts 1:8: *You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.* Be encouraged by this promise. God is fulfilling that promise today in the places you wor-



Have you ever been an outsider in any context, like immigrating to a new country or being a visitor to a church with unfamiliar traditions? What was that experience like? Who welcomed you? Who helped you fit in and understand your new surroundings?

ship, fellowship, raise families, work, play, and serve. You have received power. You have the Spirit. You are not alone. We are witnesses together.