

'Pastor Choco' Calls for Pentecostals to Stand in the Gap

Pastor Wilfredo De Jesús, named to *Time* magazine's 2013 list of the 100 most influential people in the world, carries a burden for the poor and disenfranchised. Now he has written a book that explains the biblical case for social activism, *In the Gap: What Happens When God's People Stand Strong*.

Widely known as "Pastor Choco," De Jesús is the senior pastor of New Life Covenant Church in Chicago, the largest church in the U.S. Assemblies of God Fellowship with 17,000 attendees. The church has more than 130 ministries that reach the broken-hearted, poor and homeless, including prostitutes, drug addicts and gang members.

In the Gap, which is available in English and Spanish, draws its title from Ezekiel 22:30, where God laments the lack of someone to stand "in the gap" for His people. De Jesús writes that "a gap represents a place of weakness, vulnerability and danger" and could be a social problem such as illiteracy, racism or human trafficking, or something more personal, such as a prodigal child, an unfaithful spouse or an abusive family member.

After years of standing in the gap, De Jesús has come to understand what makes a "gap person"—the champion who protects or supports someone in need, a man or woman who finds the courage to sacrifice everything to represent God and block evil from destroying those He loves.

De Jesús gives nine examples of courageous people in the Scriptures—men and women who recognized desperate needs and trusted God to use them to make a difference: Nehemiah, Esther, Noah, David, Barnabas, John the Baptist, Gideon,

Deborah and Caleb.

De Jesús believes that little has changed in the more than 2,000 years since the last of these biblical characters lived.

“People are still in distress, and God is still looking for men and women to stand in the gap in our homes, in our neighborhoods, in our cities and towns, in our nation, and in every corner of the world,” he writes.