

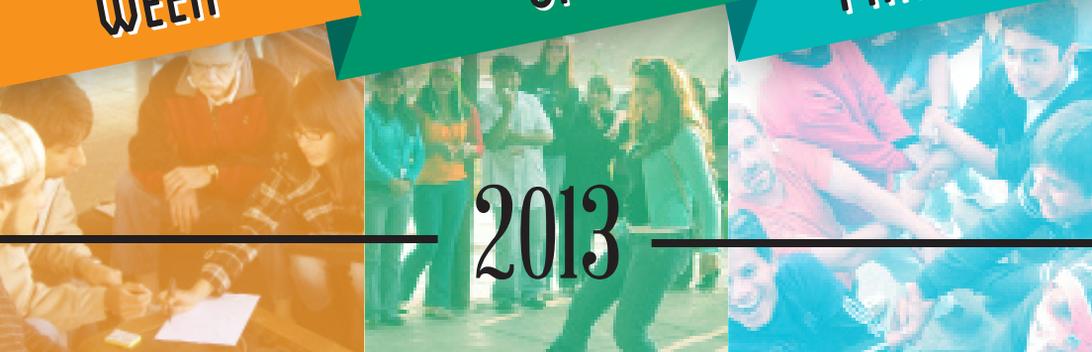


# GO IN THE STRENGTH YOU HAVE

WEEK

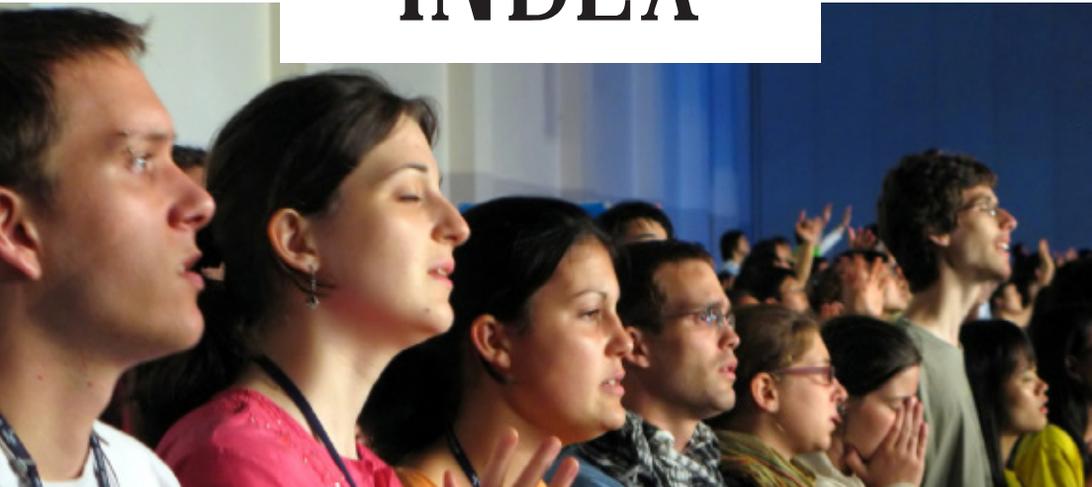
OF

PRAYER



2013

# INDEX



## 3. Elements

**4. Presentation** | Responding to God's call at this time.  
*Eliseo Vilchez-Blancas.*

**6. Exegesis** | Go in the strength you have: exegesis of Judges 6:1-24.  
*Martín Ocaña Flores.*

## -PROGRAM-

**10. Sunday, January 27** | Recognizing our situation and sin (vv. 1-6, 15).  
*Alejandro Silva García.*

**12. Monday, January 28** | Remembering what God did (vv. 7-10).

**14. Tuesday, January 29** | Valuing our effort at the present (vv. 11 and 12).  
*Benjamín Bravo Guerrero.*

**16. Wednesday, January 30** | Overcoming our limitations (vv. 12-16).  
*Verónica Reátegui Yesquén.*

**18. Thursday, January 31** | Believing God's promise (vv. 12 and 16).

**20. Friday, February 1** | Responding to the call (vv. 14 and 16).  
*María Deníz Ramírez.*

**22. Saturday, February 2** | Praising and serving God (vv.17-24).

**24. Prayer Requests** | Peru, Australia, Germany, Scotland, Samoa, Romania, Mexico, Guatemala, Nepal, Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Hawaii ...

# WEEK OF PRAYER 2013

January 27 - February 2

**OUR PURPOSE:** To discern our call at the present, recognizing our context, its problems and challenges today. To come back to God in praying and reflection of His Word, looking for direction to strengthen, restore and motivate the ministry of service and testimony of the Christian Endeavor.

**OUR MOTTO:** “Go in the Strength you have”.

**OUR BIBLE VERSES** of meditation and reflection: JUDGES 6:1-24

**OUR GENERAL MOTIVES** of prayer:

1. We will pray for the global context and particular contexts, claiming God for his help and response. We will pray open to respond his call, asking for strength to respond to the mission He has for us.
2. We will pray for the internal and external situations in the CE that affect today the life and mission of the church. We will pray recognizing the external obstacles and our limitations, without frustration, but in confidence in God’s power.
3. We will pray for the CE remnant in the churches and countries where in the past the CE was a blessing but today they experience crisis and disappointment. We will pray with hope that God lift up other Gideons there.
4. We will pray with gratitude for the testimony and example of the CE in the past and present. We will also pray for the presence and fidelity of God to the EC.
5. We will pray for the call and sending of new endeavors –men and women– to God’s mission in this world. We will pray in an open attitude in prophetic response to our context.

**OUR SPECIFIC MOTIVES** of prayer are mentioned in the meditation and reflection of each day. These motives are for countries, and we hope that other local or regional motives be added in accordance to the topic of each day.

# RESPONDING TO GOD'S CALL AT THIS TIME

In Lima 2010 –in the 26th World Christian Endeavor Convention–, sermons were about the question: What is God doing in the world? During this Week of Prayer, week of communion and integration of the CE, it is necessary to make an additional question and related it to us: What is the Church doing today? And in a more direct manner: What is the CE movement doing? What is its voice? What are their actions and testimony in the current world context?

No doubt, if we project these questions to the past, we will find out significant testimonies of service and sacrifice –in accordance to the Gospel character–, of many generations that knew how to respond to their time and context. Like the participation of hundreds and thousands of endeavurers in the modern missions –at the end of century XIX and the beginnings of the XX–; many of them sent to countries and contexts adverse to the Gospel, having the task of spreading the news about Jesus and of his kingdom; with the purpose of making disciples –followers- of Jesus, without being sectarian nor proselytizing, but, on the contrary, motivating the integration and cooperation of churches.

No doubt, we will also find in the past obscure, silent facts and non-coherent actions to the gospel, as such the criticism in Latin America, which demanded that the incursion of Protestantism was related to the neo-colonial expansion of England first and then of the United States. However, such criticism cannot deny the endogenous cases of Protestantism in these countries, nor the actions and denunciations of missionaries against the American expansionism. To this respect, a significant example was the missionary Samuel Guy Inman and his persuasive actions –in churches and other public spaces- and the denunciations against the intervention of the United States in Mexico in the first decades of the XX century. It is important to inform and remember that Inman worked in Mexico and became –years later– one of the principal leading missionaries in the

Americas. In Mexico, he was one of the presidents of the national union of CE, named back then: United Society of CE.

Today, the world context is different from when the CE movement arose and was extended. In Middle East, some Arab countries live a wave in favor of democracy; Europe is facing an economical crisis with serious social repercussions, specially Greece, Spain, Italy and Portugal; the USA is looking to get out of its 2008 economic crisis; the Latin American countries are still fighting with their processes and democratic stability, looking to overcome their poverty rates... No way, problems are global and are of our concern; they are real challenges to the Christians and to the world in general. Therefore, this Week of Prayer, the CE will meditate about our own context –recognizing the particularities of each country and region- and we will look to discern about our call in the present. We will do it by opening our Bibles, meditating in the particular context of the time of the judges, and, the call and response of a character, Gideon. We will do it with the intention of discerning and responding God’s call at this time, with the confidence that He will be with us, as He was with Gideon.

So, in that spirit and commitment, we extend the Book of the Week of Prayer, the content and organization is comprised of four resources:

1. A brief **exegesis** of the passage of this week, as a source of help to those who present the daily devotional. | 2. A daily **devotional**. | 3. A **dynamic**, as a suggestion, so that each society can use, adapt or prepare another according to their reality. | 4. And the **prayer requests** for each day.

Hoping to be united in Prayer Week, I encourage you to spread this material and put all their effort in this time of fellowship and prayer.

For Christ and His Church

ELISEO VILCHEZ-BLANCAS

WCEU Vice President, Americas and the Caribbean Region. Pastor of the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico “El Divino Salvador”, in the city of Toluca. Endeavourer since his teenage years and youth in Peru, being president of the Peruvian Christian Endeavor Union (today DENECE) in the late 80s.



# GO IN THE STRENGTH YOU HAVE:

## EXEGESIS OF JUDGES 6:1-24



MARTÍN OCAÑA FLORES is Pastor of the Evangelical Baptist Church of Moquegua, Peru. Professor of theology and Bible in several seminars in Latin America. He attended the CE in his teenage years, being manager of CE in Lima.

The book of Judges is a spiritual and social x-ray of Israel in the context of the deliverance of the promised land. Our text (6:1-24) is set within a larger episode that shows a “move” made by the characters, which include the Lord, but mainly Gideon. Thus, while in the verses 6:11-8:3 the initiative and action revolves around God, in verses 8:4-32, he disappears from the stage and it is Gideon who takes the spotlight.

### TEXT DIVISION

The account (6:1-24) is subdivided like this:

- vv. 1-6 “Israel’s oppression and poverty”
- vv. 7-10 “Israel’s outcry and God’s response”
- vv. 11-24 “Gideon’s calling and sending”

As the story unfolds, a climax is reached in the interaction between God and Gideon, as he is sent to deliver Israel: “Go in the strength you have.”

### FIRST SECTION

In 6:1-6 (“Israel’s oppression and poverty”) the text not only tells of the extreme sufferance in Israel, but also stresses the reason: “The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD” (v. 1).

It is a known expression that means that they had given in to idolatry, so much that it had even reached Gideon’s family (v. 25). That is why God “gave them into the hands of the Midianites”, and along with other peoples, the Medianites subjugated them in cruel ways (v. 3).

As we said before, God takes the initiative: he turns them in (v. 1), sends a prophet (v. 8), sits down (v. 11), appears and speaks (v. 12), commissions (v. 14), gives a promise and a command (vv. 16, 20), uses his staff and disappears (v. 21), and reassures Gideon (v. 23). But God waits for his people to cry out to him as in Exodus (“they cried out to the LORD for help”, v. 6) to do something. In this case, oppression and poverty move Israel to seek their deliverance.

## SECOND SECTION

In vv 7-10 (“Israel’s outcry and God’s response”) it should be pointed out that Jehova doesn’t answer Israel sending a liberator –as he did with Moses in Exodus– but he first sends an anonymous prophet that reminds them (1) that God acts by setting free throughout history; (2) that they shouldn’t fear their enemies; and (3) that there has been infidelity on their part.

This section is important, even when it is short, because it highlights God’s grace (v. 17). However, disobedience doesn’t stop the Lord from intervening in history to help Israel. This can be seen from v. 11 on.

## THIRD SECTION

In vv. 11-24 (“Gideon’s calling and sending”) God appears as the “angel of the LORD”, that is an expression to talk about God himself (v. 14).

The angel of the LORD appears as if he were a weary traveler that uses a staff (v. 21) and sits under Joash’s oak (v. 11). This is how the oak becomes a meeting place between God present in history and Gideon who lives abstracted in his everyday chores without imagining what will follow the liberating epiphany.

What was Gideon doing when God came to him? He “was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites” (v. 12). It can be inferred from the text that Gideon’s work was precarious and helped him get by, but it one can also feel the underlying the fear of Midian, that all the nation shared. And it is this man, with all his social, economic and even psychological characteristics, that God is about to call to carry out the freeing task.

God’s greeting –“The LORD is with you, mighty warrior”– implies a plan full of political action as a deep irony. While Gideon sees himself as a peasant surviving in hard times, God sees him as a warrior about to lead a revolution (an idea that is stressed in v. 14, “in the strength you have”).

Here we encounter several questions: how do we see ourselves? How does God see us? If we do this at all it reflects somewhat our self-perception. Will God want to take us out of our limited self-perceptions to get us involved in more ample activities that will have bigger/higher implications?

The LORD’S appearance and Gideon’s calling have a lot of similarities

with the story of the calling of Moses. If we compare our text with Exodus 2:23-4:17, we can see that there is oppression in both accounts, there is an outcry, a future liberator that is hiding/hidden, the angel of the Lord appears, the liberator is called, etc. There is no doubt that Gideon is called to become a new Moses.

In contrast, however, Gideon shows his rejection based on his wrong reading of reality. To him, God is the cause of Israel's sufferance. To Gideon, "God" is the explanation to all the misfortunes of the nation (v. 13). And God is not going to contradict his opinion, but he is going to commission him: "Go in the strength you have ... Am I not sending you?" (v. 14). Gideon's commission is related to the person who sends him. The traveler is much more than that. He is the same God that called Moses to deliver Israel from Egypt.

"Go in the strength you have" is all Gideon needs to undertake this risky mission from God. Isn't this a calling and an example to all young people today, to act following God's call?

But Gideon soon starts finding excuses in his lack of social power to guide Israel ("I am the least in my family") and in the fact that he is poor. But who can call himself poor if he has more than ten servants? (v. 27). His excuses are understandable to a certain extent, but can he escape the responsibility to work with God and with a nation that needs a leader? Gideon should know that his own strength will be accompanied by God's presence: "I will be with you" (v. 16, cf Ex. 3:12 and Joshua 1:5). God's promise is given immediately: Gideon will "will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive" (v. 16).

Paradoxically, Gideon now asks for a sign from the traveler, to whom he will present an offering that consists of a young goat and unleavened bread (vv. 17-19). The LORD decides to wait for him. All this happens under the oak (cf. v. 11). Then Gideon is given a command and he obeys (v.20). His offering, now placed on a rock, will turn into a libation that will show both his devotion and God's power (the miraculous fire is produced by the touch of the traveler's staff, and burns down the offering, v. 21). All this is a sign that God himself has been there. Then Gideon panics and thinks he will die.

"But the LORD said to him, "Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die" v. 23). The word peace in Hebrew is shalom and it means wellness, so God's word is a promise that Gideon would be blessed. That is why he built an altar to God and called it The LORD is peace ("The LORD is wellness").

And even though there is no peace or wellness in Israel yet, Gideon knows that God has prophetically anticipated a new reality in which he is involved with a large responsibility. God is no longer the cause of Israel's oppression and poverty, but the engine of freedom and wellness that awaits his nation.

How are we reading our history in Latin America? Does God have a plan

for this continent that still suffers from personal and structural violence? How are we involved as Christians in this context that demands our commitment in favor of life?

Let's expand our questions in that regard:

How are we reading what is happening in the world? Does God have a plan for our world? What will our answer and commitment be to the calling God is giving us in favor of the world?



27 JANUARY

## RECOGNIZING OUR

## SITUATION AND SIN

JUDGES 6:1-6, 15



ALEJANDRO SILVA GARCÍA is director of the Bible League of Peru, was a member of the World Board of the International Fellowship Evangelical Students, and the EC in the Peruvian Evangelical Church in the city of Cusco.

Our passage describes the context and the adverse situation of Israel at the time of the judges: Israel was victim of the tyranny of the Midianites (v. 2), of the violence and looting of the Amalekites and other peoples of the East (v. 3), cruel expansionism of their neighbours (vv. 4 and 5), and as a result, they were mired in poverty and survival. The cause of this situation and the response to it are two conflicting actions of Israel: “they did evil in the eyes of the Lord” and “cried out to the Lord”. Reflect, in reference to us, on these two actions.

## ISRAEL DID WHAT WAS EVIL IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD

Without repentance there is no miracles. We ask God to lift up a leadership able to point out the sins of our generation, to put the finger on it, and call us to repentance.

Despite being witnesses of the unfortunate consequences of sin into the human race, the sin continues to take place in our situation.

Sin kills but attracts; distracted but destroys; It is practiced and one becomes a slave. The worst thing is that Christians we become accustomed to the presence of death, losing the ability to outrage and change, accepting the preaching of “be tolerant” up with sin. Too bad!

Much of the agenda in the Church’s mission is soaked by the fashions of this century, by the brilliance of this world. There is little capacity to react to the

proposals, clearly “contrary to our faith,” because we have self-absorbed, we look at the navel, we love without any load missionary.

## AND CRIED OUT TO THE LORD

And we also cry out to the Lord to make it transform our way of thinking. We cry out that the Church let her go unpunished silence, and break the Covenant infamous speak to middle voice against injustice, corruption, abuse and oppression. We cry out so that our hearts cling to the spirit of the Lord, and our hands are translated into bronze burnish of hope and our feet in constructors of peace and the common good.

If in our time of prayer are not able to mourn for the ills afflicting our countries: violence, drug trafficking, terrorism, poverty, discrimination... What for ask upon God to intervene?

Let us ask the Lord to forgive us for not be relevant with his message, and not to take every thought captive to the cross of Christ. Let us ask the Lord to forgive us for not to be consistent with its proposal, in word and deed. Let us ask the Lord for forgiveness for not being sensitive to the needs of others. Let us ask the Lord for forgiveness, for not knowing our country.

## KEEPING SHORT ACCOUNTS

Each endeavourer or member of the CE should consider their actions before the Lord, and reflect on their responsibility regarding the political and social situation of their nation.

Give out a blank peace of paper to each endeavourer. Get each person to write down their sins or actions that do not please God on the piece of paper provided.

Put all the pieces of paper in a tin and burn them (taking appropriate safety precautions). Remind the participants that God forgives those that confess their sin. Invite a renewal of commitment to God.

## -PRAYER REQUESTS-

- Let us cry to God about the situation of our local church and our Society of Christian endeavor, confess our sins. (Override if the situation is different).
- Pray for our country, for social and economic policies that affect the poor.

## JANUARY 28

## REMEMBERING

## WHAT GOD DID

JUDGES 6:7-10

It is noteworthy that God first sent to an anonymous Prophet and not a liberator; He sent a man of the people to remember God's actions in favor of Israel and to reproach (criticize, admonish) the disobedience of his people (vv. 8-10). It is an internal voice that God raised to exhort the ingratitude, infidelity and disobedience of Israel, which were the causes of bottom of their situation. It is that, regardless of the responsibility of other Nations, was disobedience of God's people the cause of their own woes.

We cannot deny that in the development of peoples and of persons occur situations adverse, natural processes and stages that we live. However, we can not deny that many critical situations of the nations and peoples have to do with themselves, and this is what happened with Israel to move away from God and go after the gods of the Amorites (v. 10). Their idolatry and unfaithfulness to God had prepared his ruin.

So, amid violence and chaos of Israel, God through the prophet reminds them of their loyalty and leadership in a time and context also difficult for his people, when they suffered the captivity of the Egyptians. The prophet reminds them that the liberating action of God brought them out of Egypt, reminds that God brought them out of the house of bondage, and delivered them from the hand that afflicted them.

Today, before the various crises facing the world, nations and churches, we must ask: Who will send the Lord? Who will announce his works and urge for the sin of his people? Will you? I? ... We long for the CE is an instrument of God at this time, a prophetic voice for the church and the world today.

Also, before the crisis of our world, we must reflect on our responsibility and we must address the exhortation of the prophet: recognize our sin and disobedience to God, look at God's actions in favour of us, and return to his ways.

So, being sensitive to our situation and sin, it behooves us to cry out for God's intervention before violence, injustice, corruption, hunger and expansionism of our time. And commit ourselves to follow and obey the Gospel (the good news) of his Kingdom.

### APPLY TEACHING

Let us remember the great things that the Lord did in the CE. We address our situation and its causes; assume our responsibility, confess our sins and turn to the Lord. We be sensitive to what God is doing today, we respond with obedience the Lord's call and be instruments of salvation-liberation.

So be it!

## RECOGNITION AND TESTIMONY

Corporately remember of what God has done: he created you (made you) and gave you new life in Christ (with a new way of expressing your emotions and a new practice of life according to the principles of the Kingdom of God).

Get every member of the group to lie down on the floor, close their eyes and do a mental journey through their body. Focus on their breathing. Do the exercise of looking at oneself through closed eyes. Recognise the body that God has given us.

Now start to recognise your virtues, all of them, think of as many good points as possible. And, the changes you have experienced by knowing the Gospel. Each person should choose one virtue or one change in their lives and say it out loud. Once they have named the virtue or change out loud, they can open their eyes.

Finish up with a prayer putting our bodies and the life He gave us at God's disposal.

### -PRAYER REQUESTS-

- Thank God for His faithfulness and for everything he has done in our churches and in the CE in our countries. Briefly, we recall an event of EC and testify what God has done for us.
- Pray for the mission of the CE in your country at this time.
- Intercede for the CE in **Peru** and **Australia**. Consider the specific reasons for each of these two countries on **page 24**.

## VALUING OUR EFFORT

## AT THE PRESENT

JUDGES 6:11-14



BENJAMÍN BRAVO GUERRERO is pastor and works justice issues and human rights in the NGO Paz y Esperanza, was local and regional leader of the CE in Lima and of the Association of Evangelical Groups University of Peru.

In time of harvest, the Midianites bands appeared to plunder the tribes of Israel, were like locusts which ravaged everything that were in its path. While the Israelites, the only thing they could manage was to hide in the heights of the mountains. This situation of violence and oppression led the Israelites to seek God, and God heard their cry and came down to deliver them.

So God went to a small town in the hill country of the tribe of Manasseh, to Ophrah, to the property of one of the most humble families of the tribe.

While many Israelites were hiding, fearful of the actions of enemy nations, there is a young man who is thinking about how to save the wheat harvest and deliver him from the hands of the Midianites. There is urgency in what he does and is ready before the proximity of the Midianites bands. Is at that moment that appears to him the Angel of the Lord with a disturbing greeting: "The Lord is with you, O mighty man of valor." An irony or a prophecy? God does not see a young man who is racing to hide with his family, God sees something that neither the same Gideon has seen. In the midst of conflict, the fears, the same concerns of survival of Gideon, God sees great potential in him.

Like Gideon, often, the young people struggle in difficult situations and do not appreciate your attitude and what God can do with them. In the midst of a hostile world, many of them tend to abandon their struggles encouraged by their limitations and fears, by his look pessimistic about themselves. But, in contrast to the perception we have of our reality and ourselves, God sees the little details of

boldness of youth and raises new release plans. Constituting to the braves youth in agents of his Kingdom: “salt of the Earth”, “light of the world”. Thus, at this time, God invites us to look at and assess our strengths (small traits of courage, trust and loyalty to God) and orient them towards God’s plan.

God sees whatever our pessimism prevents us from seeing, sees in small acts of struggle and hope the manifestation of a “brave warrior”. To these teenagers and young, men and women, God calls work today in the liberation, in the salvation of the world.

Are you ready to answer the call?

Go in the Strength you have!

## SHOW US YOUR STRENGTH!

This is a group exercise. The place should be empty.

Make a line or station the group at one end of the room.

This dynamic will involve three people: the first will be “the warrior”, the second is “the goal” and the third is the “the limitation”

“The Goal” stands at the other end of the room. “The Warrior” should visualize the greatest goal he (or she) has as a person. “The Limitation” should try and stop the Warrior from getting to his Goal by hugging him (or her) from behind (if necessary there can be two or more people playing may be used to try to stop the warrior). The limitation (or limitations) must try at all costs to stop the warrior reaching the goal. The warrior must find internal strength to get to the Goal.

Make sure everyone gets the chance to be the warrior at least once.

## -PRAYER REQUESTS-

- Praise God for the **remnants** of the CE in denominations and countries where the churches and the CE are facing generational crises and change in the structures of denominations.
- We pray for **these efforts latents**. God strengthen them in the midst of adversity. We promote the integration and cooperation efforts, and pledge us in favor of them.
- Intercede for the CE in **Scotland** (see **page 25**). And the CE in **Nepal** (see **page 26**).

## OVERCOMING

## OUR LIMITATIONS

JUDGES 6:12-16



VERÓNICA REÁTEGUI YESQUÉN develops a ministry with children and adolescents, teaching and writing educational materials, she was leader of the CE in her local church in the city of Lima.

Several studies on human behavior show that one of the biggest obstacles in life, lies not in the physical limitation, but in the emotional limitation. And these studies say that it is the stage of the youth that presents the highest percentage with this problem, by factors of age, gender, race, social status, ideology and personal image.

A limitation of this type is the low self-esteem and insecurity of people by their level of training, their material conditions, their cultural characteristics, etc. In the passage of this day, this limitation is manifest in Gideon in the moment in which God calls it and sends it to liberate Israel (v. 15). The response of Gideon describes their limitations mainly social and cultural, and in the background, the subordinate place (weak) which has in its people: "Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house" (King James Version).

Currently, this response of Gideon is also the response of many people, and more, of many young people. Faced with adverse and hostile contexts similar (saving the distances) to the Israel in time of the judges, today many young people see their limited conditions, and believe they are insignificant to influence the transformation of reality. It is this attitude that leads them to abandon their goals and dreams, ending to conform with the situation of injustice, violence and corruption that now exists in many countries.

The call of God to Gideon invites us to overcome any limitation valuing our strength (however insignificant you think it is), being sensitive and obedient

to God's call (to what he is doing or wants to do at this time), and, trusting in his promise that he will be with us (v. 16).

So, dear endeavurers, is the time to cry out to God for the salvation of the world, for the release of all oppression and injustice that afflicts people. Is time of responding to God's mission, to what he is doing at this time, and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. God does not require an extraordinary human force, requires your dreams of hope, your indignation at injustice and Sin, your effort and courage to go forward in the face of adversity. Don't forget the promise: he will be with you and with new generations of endeavurers they respond his call.

Go in the Strength you have!

You can become an instrument of transformation!

## ALWAYS BLINDFOLDED? NOT!

In an empty space: Blindfold all those involved. Let them walk around blind, fumbling about and falling over each other for three minutes.

That is how we walk around in life, when we are far from God. We walk with limitations, without being guided by the light and the power of God. Blinded by individualism, without seeing the needs of my neighbours or the ailments of my society. When we are blindfolded we feel incapable and powerless to move forward.

Today's task is: to observe my surroundings and identify its needs. Stroll my neighbourhood and identify tasks for the CE to carry out. Use technology to see what is going on in the world, my country, my city, my suburb. Pray for the needs that I identify and how to put them into action.

If my neighbour is cold, I give him a coat.

### -PRAYER REQUESTS-

- Pray **for those teens and young of CE** than by their limited conditions are tempted to abandon their dreams and projects. May the strength of God be upon them.
- Intercede by the CE in **Germany**, for its projects and activities of the 2013 (see **p. 24s**).
- So too, let us pray for the CE in **Romania**, by your project toward adolescents and young people (see **p. 26**)

## BELIEVING

## GOD'S PROMISE

JUDGES 6:12 Y 16

As it was with Moses and Joshua realizes with Gideon: God calls him and committed their presence in the mission that gives to Gideon. That commitment is reflected in the greeting to Gideon ("The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor", v. 12) and when God reaffirms its call before the refusal or excuse of Gideon ("Surely I will be with thee [...]", v 16, KJ21 version).

Without a doubt, God has seen the strength and weaknesses of Gideon, the same as manifested in dialogue. God sees and recognizes that Gideon is a "mighty man of valour", and simultaneously sees a young man who is conditioned by its dismal environment; therefore, insists firmly and with words that invite confidence, compromising its presence in the mission of Gideon: "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man." It is the promise of God.

So, it's up to Gideon take a step of faith, has to decide between giving in to their reality (to their limited conditions and superior conditions of his enemies) or believe in the promise of God and respond to his call. He does not respond to the first call, but up after asking signal and realize that it was God himself who spoke. Only then Gideon believes and obeys God.

Surprisingly, God soon give the first assignments and tasks to Gideon. That same night he was ordered to shoot down the altars of Baal and down the Asherah that had his father, and consequently, the problems appear early on. But these internal tensions do not thrive, nor the external stresses that appear below, because God keeps his promise: is with Gideon.

Today, as in the days of the judges, the Lord continues to call men and women, and continues to make the same promise. Its mission is not over, and continues to call men and women who believe and trust in him, and are willing to follow him.

The promise of God, to be with those he called, is a constant in the Bible. No is a blessing, no is a “good word”, no is a “good wish”. Rather it is a commitment of loyalty of God to men and women he calls, is the commitment to stay and participate in the work of the envoy, is the commitment with the situation and with the purpose of the task, of to liberate, of transform the reality of violence and sin.

That ancient promise is the same that God is doing in our day as it continues calling and conducting its mission in the world. Just as God asked Isaiah, he keeps asking: “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” Done this call, and given this commitment of God, what will be your answer?

Lord is with you, mighty Endeavourer!

## FULFILLED PROMISES

Make a circle with everyone included. You can sit on the floor or chairs, whatever you prefer. Reflect and share those experiences where you have seen one of God’s promises fulfilled in your life.

If he kept you in a difficult moment, why fear? Reflect about fear and the power of God. What is greatest in us fear or His power? Renew your commitment to God.

Using some of the words or phrases that the group have in common, make a poem or a theme song with which you can reaffirm the promises of God.

### -PRAYER REQUESTS-

- Let’s take God’s promise.
- Pray for the CE in the countries of the region of Australia and the Pacific Islands (see page 27.)
- Pray for the CE in the countries of the African region. That in the near future we can have their representatives in the meetings and activities of the WCEU.
- Also pray for the CE in the countries of the Asian region. Pray for the next World Convention to be held in 2014 in South Korea.

## FEBRUARY 1

RESPONDING  
TO THE CALL

| JUDGES 6:14 Y 16



MARÍA DENÍZ RAMÍREZ is professor of Bible and theology at reformed seminaries in Peru and Mexico, she participated of the CE in the Asociación de Iglesias Evangélicas del Nor Oriente Peruano and the Iglesia Evangélica Peruana.

## G IDEON'S STRENGTH.

The attitude Gideon took before the midianites violence (v.11) speaks of an action and courageous young man, a man who was not defeated by the enemy, but who was willing to fight over his and his family survival. Gideon's action and courage were seen by God as his strength, and with such strength he was sent to save Israel from the midianites' power. At the same time he is being sent, God makes a covenant with him; that is, Gideon is not going by himself, but God's presence and direction will be with him at all times. This young man's response and reaction were natural. He felt baffled, limited and incapable to carry out God's task, and then is when God confirms His covenant with Gideon.

### REPLYING TO GOD'S CALLING AND SENDING.

God knew Gideon's strength and in the same way he knows everyone's strengths. That is the same reason that God is calling us now and is sending us to fulfill tasks and take actions they we might think unachievable. But with God's direction and presence they will be possible. Which are the necessary tasks and actions in the local, regional and world youth gatherings? Which are the powers that are dominant over the weakest sections of our societies to the extreme that they are deprived from their basic rights and needs? Will it be possible for our demanding voices to be heard before the powers that impose their political and often unjust and oppressive measures? Will it be possible to carry out God's mission in these fields? Gideon's thought he was incapable of winning the battle

over the midianites, but his strength was used by the Lord to conquer the enemy and save Israel.

The youth gathering is called to respond to God's mission in the world. His strength will be a great resource and instrument in God's hands. Let's all pray for this, united with God's mission and He will raise men and women to declare the empires' injustices and to proclaim the freeing and hoping message of Jesus Christ.

Go in the Strength you have!

## YES I WILL TO GO

Do I need to hear God's audible voice to respond to his call?

The leader of the group will play the role of the voice of God and will call out each person by name one at a time. Each one can respond to their name from their heartfelt desires: "Lord, here I am! It's me Paola, I will to go!" It is important to use the verb in present not future tense the call implies immediate action, now. We are saying I will to go we are not saying I will go sometime in the future. What we are saying is that I am making a choice, it is my will Lord to do your will: I will to Go.

To finish off, everyone including the leaders, declare out loud together: "Yes I will to Go". Give yourselves a group hug. Make another circle and list the immediate actions that you will carry out in the next few days for the benefit of the people of God. Put them into action.

It's important to start and finish by doing something, a real commitment to God always implies taking action: doing something.

## -PRAYER REQUESTS-

- Pray for the CE in the countries of the **Americas and the Caribbean** (see **page 28**).
- Pray for the CE in the countries of the **European region**. May the Lord strengthen the CE in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Austria, Germany, Ukraine, Croatia, Romania, Hungary, Netherlands.
- Pray **for contacts** with **Spain, Italy and France**. Pray for the churches in these countries, especially by their ministries with children and youth.

# PRAISING AND SERVING GOD

## JUDGES 6:17-24

**B**y what is given in the text, The angel of the Lord- which is a form of God Himself- appeared before Gideon as a traveler, a tired walking traveler who was helping himself with a staff (v.21). So, in this picture we have Gideon threshing wheat to hide it away from the madianites, when the passer by appears and there is a dialogue between them. The passer-by takes lead in the conversation; Gideon disagrees and excuses himself not realizing who he is speaking to. At the end, after asking for a signal and when the passer-by had departed out of his sight, Gideon realizes who he had been talking to, and he is afraid to die as he realizes he had just seen face to face the angel of the Lord (v. 22; ref Ex 33:20) But God gives his grace and says on to him: "Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die."

Before such God's actions- to appear unto him, to hear him, to show his grace-, Gideon's could not respond in another way but with worship. The initiative and the Grace came from God, and Gideon responded building an altar. (v.24)

### INITIATIVE AND GRACE

In all Biblical and church history there are two actions of God that are highlighted. He is the one who sees the suffering of His people and listen to their prayers, and takes the decision to come down from the Heavens to free them (Exodus 3). He is the one who in the middle of the idolatry, corruption and injustices raises the prophets to preach against personal and structural sins, and to encourage them to go back to God's ways.

That is the same initiative and grace with which God called the prophets, judges and wise men; apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. That is the same initiative and grace that he called men and women in the church, to be instruments in the freeing God's projects and plans. And it is the same action

that called Francis E. Clark and thousands of youths in the world, to proclaim Jesus good tidings.

In this special date –February 2nd – for the youth gatherings, let’s worship God for His initiative and grace to make of us and our movement a small instrument of transformation in God’s wide salvation and freeing plans.. Soli Deo gloria.

*Soli Deo gloria.*

## EACH ONE WORSHIPS

In a circle: Every member of the group should define God, according to their own experience, using only one word. Then, thank Him in their own way (they can jump, shout, dance, sing, whatever they want to do so long as it is heart felt).

Kneel down before God and intercede for each other – altogether.

Sing worship songs to God

Look into your brother or sisters eyes, bless them and give them a hug.

## -PRAYER REQUESTS-

The EC is currently serving 132 years of life and ministry. Thank God for the younger generation that God used in the spread of the gospel. Give thanks for the towns, cities and countries where the EC was established. We pray that God keep using the CE in the mission of the church.

On February 2, 1881 was established the first Christian Endeavor Society in Williston Congregational Church in Portland, Maine, United States.

Williston | Boston | Washington DC | San Francisco | Vermont | Austin | Nueva York | USA | Chihuahua | México DF | Toluca | Monterrey | Matamoros | México | Glasgow | Edimburgo | Escocia | Valparaiso | Santiago | Chile | Crewe | Londres | Inglaterra | Lima | Cusco | Arequipa | Muquiayuyo | Jauja | Cerro de Pasco | Perú | Budapest | Hungría | Montreal | New Brunswick | Canada | Barranquilla | Bogotá | Cartagena | Cali | Colombia | Ciudad de Guatemala | Atitlá | Chichicastenango | Guatemala | Sao Paulo | Campinas | Rio de Janeiro | Belo Horizonte | Brasil | Caracas | Venezuela | La Habana |

## PERU | CE LIMA

- For the growing character development of our youth leadership in greater service and commitment to the ministry of CE in Peru.
- For a Revival in the SEC across the whole country.
- For new proposals and projects to promote serving our neighbours,
- For the CE to have greater empathy towards to the problems faced in our nation (poverty, violence, social conflict).
- For the sustainability of the Mission Area of the CE Sinod Commission.
- For the nacional consultation about the future of the CE in Peru.
- For the National Convention of CE in 2013.

*Yessy Guadalupe and Samuel Cerda, Coordinators*

## AUSTRALIA | CE AUSTRALIA

- Pray for breakthrough in the area of past negativity, obstacles, and influences that have not been helpful, so that we would not be limited in our thinking but looking to God for his power and direction.
- Prayer for the remnants of the CE in Australian churches where they were a blessing in times past. Pray for these young people and young adults who were CE trained and now in leadership roles, that they might have favour, open doors and influence like never experienced before.
- Praise and give thanks to God for His faithfulness to CE and for those still faithfully serving in some capacity.
- Give thanks for those who have given financially to allow the work of CE to continue by sending Endeavourers to conventions and meetings. Pray for wise distribution of this money.
- Pray for the call and sending forth of new members for God's mission in the world; those with a passion for mission who are available for the Lord.
- Pray for revival in our churches in Australia, that leaders and members will stand on the truth of God's Word and not giving into compromise at any cost. Pray for hearts on fire for the gospel to be spread to all nations.

## GERMANY | DEUTSCHER CE-VERBAND (GERMAN ASSOCIATION OF CE)

- *January 23-24, Kassel.* CE Germany will again gather 350 volunteer leaders for two days of training in counseling and in meeting mental needs of so many young people in Germany and the postmodern world (SOS-Congress). Please pray that God may guide trainers and trainees in focusing on the real needs and finding ways to help. Pray for the manifestation of God's healing power.
- *February 7-9, Bad Gandersheim.* The senior staff of CE Germany under the leadership of National Director Rev. Rudolf Westerheide, are holding a retreat to evaluate the work of the last year and to receive guidance for the month to come. Please pray for wisdom to distinguish between things that could be

done and those that God wants to be done. Pray for a clear vision for the needs of children and teens in Germany.

- *March 14-17, Woltersdorf.* The general assembly of CE Germany is taking place; with 70 delegates from 3.000 groups in 18 regional associations. The main task they are dealing with is Christian Ethics. There will also be meetings focusing on other business and devotions. Please pray that God may help to reveal how young people today can live a confident Christian life.
- *August 1-4, Hattingen.* After the “Connect Europe” Meeting 2008 in Hungary, the CE Network in Europe plans another European youth meeting in 2013. “Connect Europe” aims at equipping youth leaders and strengthening the international links between youth organizations. The programme includes Bible studies, seminars and workshops, concerts, time for presentations and discussion. Please pray for God’s blessing on this gathering!
- *September 15, Kassel.* CE Germany is celebrating its 11th jubilee by refocusing on what CE has been called to do from its inception. September 15 is the starting point of an evangelistic campaign all over the country. Please pray that young Christians may be filled with love for those who do not yet know Christ as their savior and redeemer.
- *December.* As CE Germany is a youth movement, the members are not able to cover the Millions of Euros that are needed for the CE-Work all over the country. Please pray that many friends and supporters may be able and willing to give as much money as they can for the youth work. December is the month when most of the money must come in to warrant a financial balance of the whole year.

*Rudolf Westerheide, National Director*

## SCOTLAND | CE IN SCOTLAND

- Pray for CE supporters of all ages to have fellowship and encouragement at the planned CE Gathering on Saturday 27 April in Alloa, Scotland.
- Pray for Scottish committee members to have a vision for new ways of raising the awareness of the CE movement and the benefits of it for the local churches.
- Pray for [www.cescotland.org](http://www.cescotland.org) to be used by many to access resources for working with children to deepen their Christian faith.
- Pray that Church leaders in Scotland to be willing to learn about CE and be prepared to invite a representative to give a presentation to their Church workers.
- Thank God for faithful Endeavourers who support the work of CE financially and through prayer.
- Thank God for contacts made through the CE in Scotland Facebook page.

*Elizabeth McGrouther, Organising Secretary*

## NEPAL | CE NEPAL

- That we can organize CE-Nepal convention regularly.
- That all of our churches and fellowships celebrate CE day every year and invite other church youths too.
- That there may not be generational gap and that members of each age group support other age groups.
- That we can develop CE in Nepal as an inter-Church confessional association of Christians.
- That we can invite and attract non-Christians also that they may recognize and profess Christ as their redeemer from sins.
- That all Christians in Nepal may be able to demonstrate the love and concern for everyone in Nepal and abroad irrespective of who they are and where they may be from.

*Mahendra Bhattarai*

## ROMANIA | EC ROMANIA

- The year 2013 is crucial in the life of the Romanian CE because we have a new board of leadership made up of youth aged between 18-35. This year is a preparation year to raise young leaders and to ask God's Spirit to bring more youth to our organization. We also ask you to pray for new vision, what should fulfill our specific task and goal as Romanian CE. It seems for example that inside the Reformed Church there is positive mission activity bringing teenagers closer to our dear Lord God. Maybe our new task is to reach the teenagers who are outside the Church. There are charity organizations in the Church also so the question arises: do we have to create the same type of organizations under the CE banner? So please pray for the new leadership and for readiness to find out the new vision from our Lord and then work by His grace together with Him.
- In the past 10 years there has been a generational gap between the elder EC members and the youth who are involved in CE work but don't want to be CE members. We really wish that our Lord Jesus Christ will fill this generational gap with love in Christ to form one Body in the Lord. So pray please for unity in Christ inside the CE.
- In the last 5 years there was a real communication gap between the National CE Leaders and the CE members in spite of the fact that there was a National CE Office at Targu-Mures. But communication mainly depends on our inward feelings towards each other and how we use every way possible to keep in touch with each other. We wish and ask you to pray that the Holy Spirit may fill us with real Christian love and a commitment of responsibility towards each other, that we may have real relationships, without any secrets.

*Imola Grosz, President of CE Romania*

## WCEU AUSTRALIA AND PACIFIC ISLANDS REGION

- Thank God that the denominational Presidents in some of the Pacific Ocean countries are very keen to encourage CE in their churches.
- In Tonga the Free Wesleyan Church is represented on the World Board and the Tongan Church Youth Department Director is promoting CE.
- In Samoa the Congregational Christian Church which is also the “Mother” Church for New Zealand and Australian Samoan CCC, ensures all the Churches in its denomination has CE within its program.
- In Solomon Islands the South Seas Evangelical Church has forged a very strong desire for all its 600 churches in its many islands to have CE functioning within their programs. Some churches in Honiara are recommencing CE after many years of it being forgotten, but mainly amongst the adult age group. Some are establishing CE for Young people and I pray for Junior Christian Endeavour to be available to the Primary aged school children, to teach them how to worship and serve Jesus Christ in their culture.
- Praise God the current Bishop is supporting the recently convened National CE Union, headed up by President Pastor Derek Pongi and Secretary Rev Tim Laesanau. Praise God for their training sessions and Convention held in November 2012 in Honiara and Rennell Island in the Solomon Islands.
- Praise God for the Regional Convention held in Hawaii in 2012, and for their CE groups in the Congregational Churches as they have united now with the Pacific Region in the World’s CE Union.
- Thank God that one State in Australia continues the established CE Camps Program every December for teenagers and in January for Primary School children. Praise God for the strong Teaching each year and for the lives that express their desire to serve the Lord.
- In Micronesia and the Marshall Islands we pray for the United Church of Christ as they have been our contacts with World CE, but currently are not communicating with the Regional Vice President. Pray for these countries to re-establish their contact and help us see their current situation regarding CE in their Islands.
- Pray for the Australian Nation and churches who have not encouraged CE to continue. We pray against apathy in our nation, and also we pray for the denominations who have allowed autonomy to result in the churches not having a strong denominational lead. Therefore the CE Union has lost most its influence in the churches and young people are not having CE training, as used to happen 40 years ago.
- Pray for wisdom for the National Union to know what to do about the decline in the Australian CE activity.

*Joyce Spicer, WCEU Vice President,  
Australian & Pacific Islands Region*

## WCEU AMERICAS AND THE CARIBBEAN REGION

- Pray for the strengthening of CE in the **countries in the region**. May this year 2013 be meaningful in the life and mission of the national unions of Cayman Islands, Guatemala, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico and Peru. And of regional unions in the United States: Mid-Atlantic and Texas.
- Pray for the integration and cooperation of the CE in our region of the Americas and the Caribbean. For the strengthening of the **virtual meetings** between representatives of national unions, and for take the first steps to a regional meeting of CE.
- The National Union of EC in **Peru** changed its name, replaced UNDEC by **DENEC**. Pray for the current National Christian Endeavor Department (DENEC), that God awakens the vision and strengthens the commitment of its leaders, to address the extensive work pastorally of CE in Peru. Pray for the CE in the regions of the coast, highlands and jungle.
- Pray for the leaders of the National Union of Christian Endeavor Societies of **Mexico (UNSEC)** for their work and projects being carried out under four ministries: Evangelism, Education, Relationships and Resources. Pray for Presbyterial Unions of CE (UPSEC) and ministry of support and education to the youth of the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico. Consider also to the National Union of Societies of Christian Endeavor Intermediate (UNSIEC), its officers and its ministry to teens.
- Pray for the leaders of the Synodical Union of Societies of Christian Endeavor (**USSEC**) of the National Conservative Presbyterian Church of Mexico, and his work with the three presbyterial unions of the center (comprising the states of Mexico, Morelos, Tlaxcala, Northern Veracruz, Hidalgo, Puebla, Oaxaca, Zacatecas and Mexico City), of the East (Quintana Roo, Campeche, Tabasco, Veracruz) and of the West (part of the State of Mexico, Guerrero, Michoacan, Guadalajara, Guanajuato).
- Pray for the leaders of the National Union of Christian Endeavor of **Guatemala (UNEC)** for their national worker, the pastor Milton Garcia Meza, and managers of the various Districts (regional bodies) and ministry in the youth ministry of the National Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Guatemala.

*Eliseo Vilchez-Blancas, WCEU Vice President,  
Americas and the Caribbean Region*



VE  
CON  
ESTA  
TU  
FUERZA

GO IN THE STRENGTH YOU HAVE-



WORLD'S CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR UNION  
[www.worldsCEunion.org](http://www.worldsCEunion.org)

Headquarters: Leuschnerstr. 74, 34134 Kassel, Germany | Phone: (49-561) 4095 130 | Fax: (49-561) 4095 112 | E-mail: [centraloffice@worldsCEunion.org](mailto:centraloffice@worldsCEunion.org)

*Go in the strength you have* | January 2013 | Graphics Editor: Paul E. Vílchez | Photography p. 9, 29: Daniel Peña López | logo redesign: Samuel Cerda Meza | Dynamics: Paola Vílchez Ramírez | Translators: Raquel Tihuitl Palomino Cantú, Andrew Miller, Isabel Vílchez Blancas, Rafael Díazgonzález Plata and Marcela Mejía Tello.