

Tear Down the Doctrinal Walls - Forget Doctrinal Differences - Make Us All One - Protestants - Roman Catholics - Charismatics - Everybody!

The Promise Keepers' Objective

BY VANCE FERRELL

Seventh-day Adventists, in increasing numbers, are attending Promise Keepers' stadium meetings. Now, at last, we are learning the basic objective of this organization. Here it is —

Share this information with every Seventh-day Adventist member and pastor you know.



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The Promise Keepers' Objective

by Vance Ferrell

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“Many of the revivals of modern times have presented a marked contrast to those manifestations of divine grace which in earlier days followed the labors of God’s servants. It is true that a widespread interest is kindled. Many profess conversion, and there are large accessions to the churches; nevertheless the results are not such as to warrant the belief that there has been a corresponding increase of real spiritual life. The light which flames up for a time soon dies out, leaving darkness more dense than before.

“Popular revivals are too often carried by appeals to the imagination, by exciting the emotions, by gratifying the love for what is new and startling. Converts thus gained have little desire to listen to Bible truth, little interest in the testimony of prophets and apostles. Unless a religious service has something of a sensational character, it has no attractions for them. A message which appeals to unimpassioned reason awakens no response. The plain warnings of God’s Word, relating directly to their eternal interests, are unheeded.”

— *Great Controversy*, 463

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Introduction

Promise Keepers (PK) is the new religious movement that is sweeping the nation like wildfire. But there are a number of facts you should know about this organization.

“Dallas author and radio pastor Tony Evans gave his best Burgess Meredith impersonation, ‘Get up, you bum! Get up, you bum!’ in mimicking the key scene from *Rocky V* in which the trainer Mick convinces his boxer to pull himself together and defeat a seemingly unassailable foe.

“As Evans’ words echoed down the National Mall in Washington, D.C., an epic roar issued from the throng of men, who deeply responded to the parallel between Rocky and the American evangelical male. Evans likened ‘Get up, you bum!’ to the cry of Christ for men to live for God. The crowd rose and let loose a deafening shout.”—*Christianity Today*, November 17, 1997.

On March 20, 1990, University of Colorado head football coach, Bill McCartney, and his friend, Dave Wardell, were on a three-hour car ride to a Fellowship of Christian Athletes meeting in Pueblo, CO, when the idea of filling a stadium with Christian men first came up. Later that year, 72 men began laying plans for such a project.

In 1991, 4,200 men gathered at the University of Colorado Events Center. In 1992, 22,000 men met at Colorado University’s Folsom Stadium. In 1993, 50,000 filled Folsom Stadium to capacity. In 1994, seven sites nationwide totaled 278,600 men in attendance. In 1995, 13 gatherings were held with 750,000 in attendance. Each year since then has brought millions of men together to make Promise Keepers commitments. Huge rallies for both pastors and church members have occurred.

In six years, rally attendance has grown from 4,200 a year to 1.1 million a year. Last year’s (1996) revenue reached \$87 million.

Unfortunately, with the passing of time, the objectives of Promise Keepers have become clearer. What kind of commitments are being made at these meetings? Where is Promise Keepers taking those men? What is the instruction being given? How does this religious movement relate to concepts outlined in *Great Controversy*?

Here are several problems we find in Promise Keepers:

- Advocacy of an un-Scriptural religious unity at the expense of sound doctrine and practice.
- Acceptance and promotion of un-Biblical Charismatic teachings.
- Approval and use of psychological techniques and approaches.
- Use and promotion of corrupted modern versions of the Bible.
- Misapplying, twisting, and misinterpreting key passages of Scripture.
- Evangelism at the expense of maintaining the purity of the faith.
- Ecumenical inroads into a remarkably broad number of denominations and churches.

We will expand on several of these points later in this report.

The book, *Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper*, was published in 1994 by Focus on the Family, with articles by leading Protestant Ecumenical preachers (including Bill Bright, James Dobson, Tony Evans, Gary Smalley, and Luis Palau). The subtitle is “seven solid promises that will change a man’s life forever.”

An example of what will be found in it is Jack Hayford's comment on page 19 of the first chapter (which discusses Promise One: "A man and his God: A Promise Keeper is committed to honoring Jesus Christ through worship, prayer, and obedience to God's Word in the power of the Holy Spirit"):

"Redeeming worship centers on the Lord's Table. Whether your tradition celebrates it as Communion, Eucharist, the Mass, or the Lord's Supper, we are all called to this centerpiece of Christian worship."

Is there any difference between the Lord's Supper and the Roman Catholic sacrifice of the Mass? Indeed, there is an incredible difference! How could anyone promise to obey God's Word, and yet stoop to such a compromise?

Promise Keepers teaches those who attend it that all men are going to be saved, regardless of what church they belong to.

Here is how Coach Bill McCartney, founder of PK, described it on pages 160-161 of the same book:

"Now, I don't mean to suggest that all cultural differences and denominational distinctives are going to disappear. But what I know is that God wants to bring Christian men together regardless of their ethnic origin, denominational background, or style of worship.

"There's only one criterion for this kind of unity: to love Jesus and be born of the Spirit of God. Can we look one another in the eye—black, red, brown, yellow, Baptist, Presbyterian, Assemblies of God, Catholic, and so on—and get together on this common ground: 'We believe in salvation through Christ alone, and we have made Him the Lord of our lives'?"

"Is that not the central, unifying reality of our existence? And if it is, can we not focus on that and call each other brothers instead of always emphasizing our differences? Men, we have to get together on this!"

Although several other denominations question the rise of Promise Keepers, ironically, only the fundamentalist Baptists and other lesser-known denominations, such as the Mennonites, are deeply upset about the doctrinal void that it urges. Nearly all the other denominations—including our own—see this as a great opportunity for strengthening the ranks of their own members.

We will let the Baptists explain the problem to us:

In 1996 and 1997, the Southwide Baptist Fellowship, the Fundamentalist Baptist Fellowship, and General Association of Regular Baptists enacted resolutions warning their member churches against attending Promise Keepers' meetings or having anything to do with them. Here is one of them:

"Whereas the para-church organization known as Promise Keepers advocates an unscriptural religious unity at the expense of sound doctrine and practice, accepts and promotes unscriptural charismatic teachings and the inclusion of Roman Catholicism, approves and uses psychological approaches that mix truth and error, uses unholy music and highly questionable speakers, and whereas they are aggressive in the pursuit of new members, a definite threat to Bible-believing Baptist churches who hold to doctrinal purity; therefore, be it resolved that the Southwide Baptist Fellowship stands firmly against it and its ecumenical bent."—*Southwide Baptist Fellowship, meeting at Trinity Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Florida, October 7-9, 1996.*

Here is a second:

"We express our opposition to the inclusive character of Promise Keepers, which minimizes doctrine and denominational distinctions in an attempt to achieve unity and fellowship. We voice our concern over the practice of using some speakers who are identified with denominations that are apostate or charismatic."—*General Association of Regular Baptists, June 25, 1997.*

And here is a third:

"The FBF [Fundamentalist Baptist Fellowship] continues to oppose the burgeoning movement known as Promise Keepers, and see in this 'grassroots ecumenism' one of the gravest dangers to the cause of true Biblical separation in this generation. A recent example of this ecumenism occurred at the 1996 Clergy Conference for Men held in Atlanta, Georgia, February 13-15, where Bill McCartney, leader of Promise Keepers, said:

"It is exciting to see the denominational barriers come down as we have Protestants and Roman Catholics together. The purpose of this meeting is to have the unity of the church."

"While giving lip service to Jesus Christ, Promise Keepers, in its attempt to break down denominational walls, sends out a confusing message concerning doctrinal walls that God sets

up in His Word as essential to Biblical Christianity.”—*Fundamentalist Baptist Fellowship, meeting at Bethel Baptist Church, Schaumburg, Illinois, June 11-13.*

At its annual conference on June 20-22, 1995, the Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America passed a lengthy statement about Promise Keepers, of which this is a portion:

“Promise Keepers’ official sounding Doctrinal Statement is crafted so those with theological and ecclesiastical persuasions of belief and non-belief including Catholic, Mormon, Charismatic and New Evangelical may and do participate . . . One of Promise Keepers’ goals is to have representative involvement in local churches throughout North America . . . Promise Keepers’ leaders, speakers and participants hold a multitude of unbiblical doctrines such as sign gifts, psycho-Heresy, and participants are strongly encouraged to ignore Bible doctrine and propound methods that undermine church autonomy and pastoral authority. We therefore resolve and do hereby encourage pastors and laymen to take a clear stand and reject any participation with Promise Keepers lest God’s command against compromise be dishonored and churches succumb to ecumenism . . . [and we should] teach our congregations the lessons of Scripture and experience which clearly warn against cooperation in spiritual efforts, though noble-sounding, which such are undertaken in ways which conflict with God’s Word.”—*Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America, June 20-22, 1995.*

A fifth Baptist association, in its June 21-25, 1997, annual meeting, has gone on record against participation in Promise Keepers:

“[We are] urging our people and our churches to avoid Promise Keepers and instructing denominational departments and employees not to promote nor participate in the movement.”—*General Association of Regular Baptists, June 25, 1997.*

Here is a partial list of other religious groups, organizations, religious publications, and schools which have taken a stand against Promise Keepers:

American Council of Christian Churches, Fundamental Evangelistic Association, Baptist World Mission, Ohio Bible Fellowship, Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America, Mission to Catholics, Media Spotlight, PsychoHeresy Awareness Ministries, Bob Jones University, The Berean Call Ministry.

In addition, all black denominational headquarters, as well as Reformed Church leaders, have refused to approve it. There are reasons. Most are given in this report.

Several books have been written on the subject, including, *Promise Keepers: Beware! Vols. 1-2*, by D.W. Cloud and Mike Betancourt. *Promise Keepers in the Light of Scripture*, by Douglas Comin; *Beyond Promises: A Biblical Challenge to Promise Keepers*, by Douglas Wilson and David Hagopian; and *Promise Keepers: Another Trojan Horse*, by Philip Arms.

Such prominent church speakers as John MacArthur, Jr.; John Armstrong; R.C. Sproul, Jr.; and Don Matzat have spoken against participating in Promise Keepers’ meetings.

Our readers have been reading our ongoing tract series, entitled *The Concordia Crisis*. We are happy to report that the current president of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has spoken out publicly against contacts with Promise Keepers. Such a statement as the following one indicates that, over 20 years after the crisis at Concordia Seminary which shook that denomination, it is still fairly conservative:

“I have watched the Promise Keepers’ movement develop. The background of the movement is important for us to understand. It traces its theological roots to the Pentecostal movement. For instance, the magazine of the Promise Keepers’ movement features many advertisements from charismatic and Pentecostal organizations. The magazine itself is published by individuals who have been associated with a popular charismatic magazine called *Charisma*. So, we need to be cautious as we hear the Promise Keepers movement’s doctrinal assertions.

“The Promise Keepers’ movement very purposefully de-emphasizes the importance of complete faithfulness to the Word of God. They tend to overlook differences between denominations as not all that important. The Holy Scriptures, time and again, urges us to be completely faithful to all that Jesus has given us . . .

“The Promise Keepers’ movement tends to view specific doctrinal points of disagreement as non-essential, unimportant and thus able to be overlooked. This would explain why the Promise Keepers’ movement offered Holy Communion to a very diverse crowd of people at the Promise Keepers’ clergy conference recently held in

Atlanta [February 1996]. Differences must be ignored in order to facilitate this sort of ecumenical gathering, which we would describe as unionistic.

“Because God commands us to be faithful to the whole counsel of His Word it is both dishonest and insincere for us to pretend that differences do not ‘matter’ or are ‘insignificant’ and thus join in fellowship with those who do not accept the teachings of the Word or whatever the subject might be, the sacraments or the doctrine of regeneration, or justification, faith, sanctification, and all the rest.

“The Promise Keepers’ movement downplays differences in these key areas and tries to reduce everything to a very simplistic formulaic approach to the Faith. The Promise Keepers’ movement tends to accept the notion that there is a ‘generic’ sort of Christianity to which the various denominations add their particular emphases, sort of like a ‘base’ of paint to which various colors are added to give the paint the particular color desired . . .

“Overlooking differences is not an option for the faithful of God. Recognizing them and realizing that in this life we may have to separate over them is a responsible choice, as opposed to simply ‘agreeing to disagree’ and then neglecting these divisive issues.”—*A.L. Barry, president, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Christian News, June 10, 1996.*

In the summer of 1996, a well-known fundamentalist editor and writer, Shelton Smith, made the following comments in a question and answer interview. Can you imagine the editor of *Sword of the Lord* magazine having more common Biblical sense than many of our own people?

“*Question:* Promise Keepers is a new phenomenon on the scene today. What can you tell us about it?”

“*Answer:* It’s the latest major attempt to ecumenize the face of Christianity in America. Ecumenism is an attempt to ‘homogenize’ the religious scene so everyone will walk the same, talk the same, do the same—and in the same place at the same time—without attention to distinctions or details . . . The distinctives of the Bible must never be diluted, compromised or set aside. If you hold the Bible precious to your soul, if the Bible is the Word of God, then certain distinctives will be held . . . The Promise Keepers’ success reflects gullibility, and lots of it. There is so much ignorance of the Bible today; it’s tragic. People are grasping in their desperation at all kinds of

straws. So many do not check it out by the standards of the Bible; they just grab it and go with it.

“*Question:* But Promise Keepers has its own distinctives, doesn’t it?”

“*Answer:* Yes, they do! Their first distinctive is to require you to set aside *your* distinctives.

“*Question:* What are you saying?”

“*Answer:* The Promise Keepers have their own agenda, and a part of their stated objective requires you to submit to their pre-set program. Specifically, you can’t talk about things like eternal security at Promise Keepers. It’s forbidden. Of course they wouldn’t want you to say anything about standards for music, since they have chosen to use the rock culture, charismatic style of music for their rallies. An observer at the rally for clergy in Atlanta [February 1996] said, “The big-beat contemporary music brought the ministers to their feet, followed by giving a ‘high five’ to all those around them . . .

“*Question:* Do you not find some good things which you can commend with Promise Keepers?”

“*Answer:* That’s not the issue! You can usually find a few good things in almost anything. But when they are violations of clear Bible commands (which are not only ignored but encouraged) in order to achieve the goals, it’s time to say no. When there are too many flies in the soup, you don’t eat the soup.

“*Question:* But it’s all voluntary participation, is it not?”

“*Answer:* I’m hearing stories about people being pressured pretty hard. The football coach [Promise Keepers’ Bill McCartney] made a significantly disrespectful statement toward pastors who weren’t lining up: McCartney said, ‘Our clergy are divided . . . There is no unity of command . . . There is tremendous division in our clergy . . . If a guy [a pastor] says that he doesn’t want to go [to the Promise Keepers’ Clergy Conference held in Atlanta], he needs to be able to tell us why . . . We’ve got to have one leadership, one leadership only.’ This incredible summons is way out of line; it’s off-base. Pastors who cave in to the Promise Keepers’ ‘leadership’ are going to be hearing more such demands made upon them. I think his statement is reflective of what may be expected from Promise Keepers. They want everybody—Baptists, Catholics, everybody—to do the Promise Keepers’ thing, no matter what. That’s untenable, uncomfortable, unwarranted, totally unacceptable . . .

“Steer clear of Promise Keepers! Do not get into Promise Keepers. Give your loyalty to Bible

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truth, not a superficial unity. Follow Christ based on Bible truths. Don't get ensnared by this newest ecumenical craze called Promise Keepers."—*Dr. Smith Talks about the Promise Keepers, Sword of the Lord, May 31, 1996.*

Individuals who have attended Promise Keepers' meetings are convinced that that high-tech psychology is used to sway the vast crowd into accepting concepts they would not otherwise consider.

"If men are to come together as men, they would do well to follow what the Bible says rather than Freudian fables, Jungian myths, and other self-serving, man-made psychologies. And they would do well to gather together in the place where they are meant to grow—in the local church—not in huge rallies with 'mob psychology' or in groups using encounter group techniques and undermining important doctrinal distinctives."—*Martin and Deidre Bobgan, Promise Keepers and PsychoHeresy.*

"There are in the ministry men who gain apparent success by swaying minds through human influence. They play upon the feelings at will, making their hearers weep, and in a few minutes laugh. Under labor of this kind, many are moved by impulse to profess Christ, and there is thought to be a wonderful revival; but when the test comes, the work does not endure. Feelings are stirred, and many are borne along by the tide that seems to be setting heavenward; but in the strong current of temptation they quickly float back as driftwood."

— *Gospel Workers, 382*

The Ecumenical Connection

On April 29, 1995, at a Detroit Silver Dome Promise Keepers' meeting, Bill McCartney demanded that all pastors participate in the forthcoming 1996 Clergy Conference.

"Now, I think many of you are in touch with the fact that we're having a pastor's gathering in Atlanta in February. This gathering in Atlanta should exceed 100,000 clergymen. Why? Because we have many more than that, and every single one of them ought to be there. We can't have anybody pass up that meeting. If a guy [pastor] says that he doesn't want to go, he needs to be able to tell us why he doesn't want to go! Tell them, 'Why wouldn't you want to be a part of what God wants to do with His hand-picked leaders?' . . .

"Now listen to me, men; that February meeting to me is not a coincidence that it comes over Valentine's Day. I think we're going to have another St. Valentine's Day massacre. I think Almighty God is going to rip open the hearts of our leaders. I think He's going to tear them open. And I think He's going to put them back together again as one. One leadership! We've got to have one leadership, one leadership only!"

The 1996 Clergy Conference for Men in Atlanta, Georgia, which convened on February 13-15 of that year, provides us with a typical example of a primary objective of Promise Keepers, which is, *bring all the churches together into one vast, non-doctrinal, mega-church!*

"This is a historic event never before matched anywhere in this nation' is the way Promise Keepers' leaders described the gathering of 39,024 clergy in Atlanta, Georgia's, Dome. Clergymen came from all 50 states, 11 Canadian Provinces, as well as 16 other nations. Texas was the state with the highest number registered—2,657. Participants ranged from retirement age to young

men fresh out of seminary, but no women were permitted to attend—even though some have attempted to do so as members of the clergy."—*ACCC Challenge, April 1996 issue [published by the American Council of Christian Churches].*

Ralph G. Colas, in his article, *An Eyewitness Report on the 1996 Clergy Conference for Men*, described the gathering this way:

"While the registration fee brought in \$3-\$4 million, it is the sale of Promise Keepers' products that is the money producer: polo shirts, \$28; windbreakers, \$35; sweatshirts, \$45; caps, \$10-\$16; coffee mugs, \$5. These are just a few of the items marketed by Promise Keepers. Tapes, videos, books, and other Promise Keepers' materials also provide substantial income for Promise Keepers. Their yearly income is reported as more than \$110 million! . . .

"Joseph Garlington . . . asked the ministers to turn to one another and say, 'The Lord is calling.' The next 'chant' shared with one another was 'There is room for you in the body of Christ.' This was the beginning tactic to 'work the crowd' and to break down any reservations a clergyman might have toward those of a different religious group. The clergy eagerly followed the leaders' suggestions . . .

"The big beat, contemporary music brought the ministers to their feet, followed by giving a 'high five' to all those around them."

From the podium, Dale Schlafer cried out to the massive crowd of clergymen:

"Some churches represented have ten members while others have 20,000. There are priests, bishops, and ministers from every denomination in our country!"

He added that some had been fasting for 30-40 days, that God would "reunite us" at this gathering.

At the gathering, Bill McCartney told the

crowd that denominational barriers had been removed, and every Protestant group, as well as Roman Catholics, were welcome to participate. He said one of the purposes of Promise Keepers was to break down denominational walls, and added:

"The church is in bondage to the giant of denominational restrictions and another giant of racial and ethnic boundaries. PK is dedicated to uniting men through vital relationships."

He also said:

"This is a dream come true. Our Father in Heaven has sent out the invitation for Biblical unity. Biblical unity is the only way we will survive in the days ahead . . . Contention between denominations has gone on long enough. If the Church ever stood together, God would have His way!"

At the meeting, McCartney declared war on "denominationalism":

"The Church has never stood together to declare to the giant of denominationalism, 'We will no longer be in bondage to you!'"

Then he quoted Paul, "Who are you to judge another man's servant?"

At another session of the two-day gathering, Max Lucado continued on the same theme, beating, beating it into the minds of the ministers and priests in attendance. His sermon, entitled "*From Bondage to Freedom*," was about breaking down the walls of the denominations which separate us from one another.

Lucado made the provocative statement, "In essentials unity, in non-essentials charity." *Apparently the only "essentials" is unity itself!* Such things as doctrines are non-essentials.

At this juncture, Lucado asked the men to call out, all at one time, their denominational name. The result was a babel of sounds. Then he told them to call out the name of Jesus, and that, of course, was more easily heard.

—Lucado then cried out to the thousands of listening pastors and priests from across America:

"The sin of disunity causes people to go to hell! The step to unity is acceptance and no longer to speak evil of one another. Would it not be wonderful not to be known as either Protestant or Catholic? This is a God-sized dream and no one in our generation has ever seen the Church united!"

As Lucado ordered the ministers to apologize to every minister representing a denomination they had ever spoken negatively of, Steve Green, the singer, strode forward and sang repeatedly the phrase, "*Let the walls come down!*"—as the 40,000 ministers shouted, whistled, clapped, and cheered.

By this time, they had been worked up into a high level of emotional feeling.

Then a message was read from Billy Graham, who told the assembled clergy to "*tear down the walls that separate us!*"

This was immediately followed by a powerful act of symbolic unity: A communion service was held for everyone present.

Obviously, there are so many variations of this service in the several denominations, that even holding one together was astounding! There is the Eucharist, Holy Communion, the Lord's Supper, and the Sacrifice of the Mass. Yet, somehow, they managed to all get through it together.

At a press conference soon after, a leading church official (Henry Blackaby of the Southern Baptist Convention) replied:

"We don't try to evaluate that, and neither do we take a position regarding women serving as pastors."

At this juncture, Joseph Stowell, president of Moody Bible Institute, also spoke up in defense of the no-doctrine unity.

"Our God does not ever wear an angry face. He deals with compassion!"

Apparently, neither doctrinal purity nor heretical practices matter anymore.

As the Atlanta stadium rally drew to a close, Randy Phillips, Promise Keepers' president, announced that the twenty-two Men's Conferences scheduled for 1996 would have as their theme, "*Break Down the Walls.*" Phillips said, "Isolation is the breeding ground for walls—walls of separation. *Men, we are coming together in 22 stadiums in 1996 to break down the walls!*"

Not only such men as Billy Graham and Joseph Stowell are backing the one-denomination objective of Promise Keepers, but also is Campus Crusade for Christ. This is one of the largest Christian collegiate organizations in America.

In its *Alumni Newsletter* of January 1995, ACCC printed an article which describes the purpose of “*Strategic Alliance*,” the name they have given to the Promise Keepers/Campus Crusade organizational link.

“*Strategic Alliance*—Have you attended Promise Keepers and want to receive further training? ‘M.A.N. to Man’ seminars are part of a Strategic Alliance between Campus Crusade for Christ and Promise Keepers to help men (1) personalize issues that concern men; (2) provide basic leadership training; and (3) give information on small-group Bible studies especially for men.”

Speakers at Promise Keepers’ rallies include the leading Protestant interdenominational speakers of our time:

Ron Blue, Bill Bright, Chuck Colson, Tony Egantgs, Bill Glass, Franklin Graham (Billy’s son), Jack Hayford, Howard Hendricks, Bill Hybels, Bob Moorhead, Luis Palau, Randy Phillips, Raul Ries, James Ryle, Gary Smalley, Joe Stowell, Chuck Swindoll, John Trent, Glenn Wagner, John Wesley-White, Bruce Wilkinson, and Ravi Zacharias.

“McCartney has developed a team of male kindred spirits who round out the roster of speakers at PK stadium events, including Christian therapist Gary Smalley, popular author Max Lucado, media preacher Tony Evans, and Four-square Gospel pastor Jack Hayford.”—*Christianity Today*, November 17, 1997.

James Dobson, head of Focus on the Family, has given Promise Keepers extensive publicity on his radio program; has spoken at a 1993 Promise Keepers’ rally in Boulder, Colorado; and has written a chapter in the group’s guidebook. In addition, Dobson’s organization has published Promises Keepers’ books and materials.

“As early as 1992, when the group was without a constituency or a mailing list, it received \$10,000 in critical assistance from James Dobson, a psychologist and Christian activist who produces the most widely heard Christian daily radio program.”—*Time*, October 6, 1997.

Pat Robertson, former presidential candidate and Christian Coalition head, has long been a Promise Keepers’ supporter.

By 1997, about 20,000 small, regularly held, PK fellowship groups around the country were meeting in local churches and homes.

In 1996, an average of 50,000 men gathered at each of 22 sites for a total of 1.1 million.

“Promise Keepers’ surveys show that 62% of stadium-goers struggle with sexual sin in their lives.”—*Time*, October 6, 1997.

Promise Keepers has announced that it wants to “*get into every church*” in America! On February 4, 1997, leaders of Promise Keepers held a press conference in Washington, D.C., in preparation for their million-man 1997 rally, “*Stand in the Gap*.”

“*[Question:]* You obviously have a vision for America, and I’d like to just get an idea of what that is.

“*[McCartney:]* Well, what we envision happening over the next four years is we want to develop a relationship with every church in the United States that names the name of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. And make sure that the church has every opportunity to develop a vibrant men’s ministry, where the men of God in that church would stand up and be called upon and be counted upon . . . And so we envision getting into every church and partnering with them in ministry and in prayer.”

On October 23, 1997, Promise Keepers held a massive “*Stand in the Gap Sacred Assembly*” in Washington, D.C.

At that rally over a million were assembled, and told to stand in the gap for their families and their churches—and break down the walls of division between denominations.

One individual who attended took notes on what the speakers told the assembled men:

“The Promise Keepers at the sacred assembly were asked to repent of denominationalism. They were invited to shout out the names of their denomination. When they did, obviously it was just a confused roar. This was in sharp contrast to when they were asked to shout that they were Christians or that Jesus is the only way to heaven. The men were asked to pray for a ‘United Church, the miracle of the Millennium.’ The unity for which Christ prayed in His high priestly prayer in John 17 was stressed. The watching world should see that the Christians are all one. The ‘sin of sectarianism’ was deplored. Those who think they know all the truth and that their denomination is more faithful to God’s Word than another are guilty of sin. ‘The world has never seen a united church. May it now see it.’ We have seen a divided small church in communities from which we have come. Today we see a

united 'Great Church.' 'We are men of integrity. We are Promise Keepers,' those at the sacred assembly were told. 'We are brothers of Jesus Christ from every denomination . . . We are people of Jesus Christ.'

"'Let the walls' of denominationalism 'come down' was constantly emphasized. The body of Christ was being weakened by division and by brother fighting against brother. It was time to end this foolishness. McCartney emphasized that God is a God of oneness. He mentioned the unity stressed in Ephesians 4:16 and Colossians 1:1, 2, that every church should be connected to each other . . .

"McCartney urged each Promise Keeper to submit to his pastor. 'Obey your leaders. Submit to their authority.' Go back to your church and give away your time, talents and treasures. Promise Keepers were urged to tell their pastors that 'I put my faith in you as leader.' Nothing was said about the fact that many pastors are religious liberals who deny the fundamental truths of historic Christianity or that many major denominations have women pastors and have officially gone on record as supporting the murder of unborn infants and allow practicing homosexuals and lesbians to serve as pastors."—*Christian News, October 13, 1997.*

What then is the position of Promise Keepers on homosexuals?

"Some homosexual activists charge that PK is exclusive and promotes homophobia. But in television interviews, McCartney clearly said homosexuals would be welcome in the movement."—*Christianity Today, November 17, 1997.*

In God's Word we are told to "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). That faith is found in the Written Word, as given to us by Divine inspiration. We are not to trade it for fellowship with all the liberal and apostate religious organizations in the land.

How far does Promise Keepers go in uniting with apostate teachings? Step by step, it continues in the downward track.

According to an article in the *St. Louis Post-*

Dispatch for July 13, 1996, Promise Keepers has announced it has reversed its former position—and now welcomes women pastors to its meetings!

Here is the news clip:

"Kiel Center will be rocking with the sound of men singing hymns and renewing promises of fidelity to their families on a Saturday afternoon in August. Promise Keepers, a male Christian fellowship group, is planning its first large St. Louis Assembly August 24. They hope to sell 10,000 to 12,000 seats at \$15 each . . .

"Promise Keepers is a nondenominational group. Initially most participants were members of evangelical churches or had no churches. Now it attracts mainline Protestants and Catholics . . .

"Promise Keepers welcomes female pastors and leading male members, [Louis] Monroe said."—"Promise Keepers to Rally at Kiel," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch, July 13, 1996* [Monroe is a Promise Keepers' rally director].

In spite of these doctrinal problems, it seems as if every leading Protestant speaker is jumping on the PK bandwagon.

Jerry Falwell, who claims to be a fundamental Baptist, hosted a Promise Keepers' rally at his Liberty University in Virginia in 1996. A sizeable number of leading Baptist leaders participated in that event.

Then there is the National Religious Broadcasters Association. It now numbers some 800 broadcasters throughout America and overseas, and represents a wide array of diverse theological positions. The NRB is a subsidiary of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) which, since its founding in 1942, has tried to hold to a compromised position between conservatives and liberals, fundamentals and ecumenicals.

Fifty years ago, the NAE took the position that Roman Catholicism was a false religious system. But it has since changed its stance, and now advocates cooperation with Roman Catholicism, as though it could be considered a part of the body of Christ.

Are we now to unite with Rome? Read on.

The Catholic Connection

Promise Keepers has seven pledges which it wants all Christian men in the nation to sign. Number six is a promise to promote unity between all denominations. Promise Keepers' leadership has stated plainly that the unity they seek includes Roman Catholicism.

Speaking at one of the early rallies, Founder Bill McCartney said, "Hear me; Promise Keepers doesn't care if you're Catholic." A writer for the liberal magazine, *Christian Century*, gave this analysis of Promise Keepers:

"There is little if any political labeling. 'Liberals,' either political or theological, are not paraded for ridicule. There is scant evidence of the Fundamentalists' non-negotiable principles of faith. Descriptions of Christian belief are framed in broad rather than narrow terms."—*David Halbrook, Ministries Today, March-April 1995.*

Samson gave up his power when he gave up his separation. The Apostle Paul declared:

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they are such [that] serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."—*Romans 16:17-18.*

At the Memphis stadium gathering, on October 11-12, 1996, Chuck Colson's topic was "*The Unity of the Body: Brothers United in Christ.*" You will recall that it was Colson who, with a Catholic priest, co-authored the notorious "*Evangelicals and Catholics Together*" document a couple years earlier.

Colson told the gathered men that division is our sin today and that, when we are not one, we are working against God and His plan for our lives. Colson said evangelism is im-

possible when the denominations are not united. He called out that we need to reach across denominational lines, since, *whatever your denomination, you already belong to Jesus.* Whether Catholic, Methodist, Orthodox, Assemblies, or Baptist—we all belong to one another and to God, he declared. "I'm proud Mother Teresa's my sister in Christ!"

We understand that Colson is a Southern Baptist, but that his wife is a Catholic. As he united with a Catholic in marriage, so he wants us to unite with them in worship.

The Promise Keepers' connection with Rome goes back to its founder, Bill McCartney. Bill was a lifetime devout Roman Catholic who attended Mass daily until he visited the Boulder, Colorado, Vineyard Fellowship. Liking the pastor's preaching, he began attending there, but there is no record that he ever broke with Rome.

Ex-Catholics who truly come out of the Catholic communion are concerned to rescue others from its errors. But not Bill. Doctrines never have meant much to him. It is the "spirit" that counts. McCartney accepts Catholics as Christians and sees no reason to evangelize them.

"McCartney's own biography—as a cradle Catholic who became born again and then found his way into a lay-led para-church ministry—offers one possible scenario for PK's growing role as an agent of change within American Christianity."—*Christianity Today, November 17, 1997.*

In his autobiography, *From Ashes to Glory*, McCartney admitted that he had been a "daily communicant in the Catholic Church," but through a new dedication, he "got saved." He

adds, "Making a profession of faith like I did may not be expected and may not even be important in the Catholic Church." In other words, he had tacked on something new, yet no life-changing break had been made.

Keep in mind that the Catholic Church today says it teaches salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. But that is not true!

So when the various religious persuasions attend a Promise Keepers' meeting and hear that, they can go home believing it is what they already believe—even new theology Adventists.

It is not enough to preach part of the truth, without preaching against error. It is not enough to preach grace without preaching obedience by faith.

The Catholic and Mormon "converts" who attend Promise Keepers' rallies, are sent back to their own churches for PK small group meetings conducted by their own pastors. The very fact that both the Roman Catholic and Mormon denominations have officially declared that they find no conflict between PK teaching and their own doctrines is extremely revealing.

Bill McCartney has repeatedly said that there are only two criteria for attending his conferences: "Do you love Jesus and have you been born of the Spirit of Jesus Christ?"

Roman Catholics are taught to show their "love for Jesus" by partaking of the Mass (*New Catholic Catechism*, 1367ff).

Did you know that the Roman Catholic Church believes in the "new birth"? They do, but not the kind you believe in. For them it is equivalent to the act of baptism, which most of them received as infants when three moistened fingers were touched to their foreheads.

"The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude; this is why she takes care not to neglect the mission she has received from the Lord to see that all who can be baptized are 'reborn of water and the Spirit.' God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism."—*New Catholic Catechism*, 1257.

When the National Organization for Women (NOW) passed a resolution denouncing Promise Keepers as "the greatest danger to women's rights," they announced that it was planning

a counter-demonstration in Washington, D.C. when the October 1997 "Stand in the Gap" Promise Keepers gathering occurred;—at a September 16 press conference, a group of conservative women from mainline Protestant, Orthodox—and Roman Catholic—churches denounced NOW for its attack on the Promise Keepers.

The Tidings, the official voice of the Roman Catholic archdiocese of Los Angeles, had an article explaining the close relationship between the Catholic Church in America and Promise Keepers. It appears they have worked out a very close agreement.

"Promise Keepers is a basic program of evangelization for men, begun among more fundamentalist and evangelical Christian communities, but now being expanded to include Catholic congregations . . .

"The fundamental theme of the weekend is to be a man of faith, a man committed to the Lord Jesus Christ," explains Father Christian Van Liefde, pastor of St. Hillary Church in Pico Rivera who, at the urging of Cardinal Robert Mahony, has studied the feasibility and appropriateness of utilizing Promise Keepers at the Catholic parish level.

"While noting the evangelical roots of the program, Father Van Liefde says there is no 'doctrinal' issue which should cause concern to the Catholic Church.

"Promise Keepers places a very strong emphasis on returning to your own church congregation or parish and becoming active laymen, Father Van Liefde points out. 'There is no attempt at proselytizing or drawing men away from their faith to another church' . . .

"Father Van Liefde is optimistic that Promise Keepers can grow at the parish level as well—and without adversely impacting existing parish programs or finances."—*The Tidings*, March 31, 1995.

But now, we come to the 1997 changeover in Promise Keepers' beliefs and practices, made to satisfy the Catholic hierarchy and the events at the Franciscan University, in Steubenville, Ohio, which led up to them.

The New York *Buffalo News*, for May 17, 1997, contained a report on the upcoming

Promise Keepers' meeting in that area. This newspaper report contained very significant information.

- Roman Catholic bishops support Promise Keepers, through their National Conference of Catholic Bishops organization.

- A Roman Catholic is on the Promise Keepers board of directors.

- In the city where the stadium rally is held, a Roman Catholic Mass is said on the preceding Sunday, in order to sanctify the gathering of the attending Catholic men.

The first two points will be amplified upon later in this report.

Here is more from this important newspaper article. Read it carefully; it is packed!

"Although the movement is perceived to be largely Protestant, [Bill] McCartney [Promise keepers' founder and chief executive officer] said during a news conference in the Buffalo Christian Center that Promise Keepers has the approval of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, uses some Catholic speakers and welcomes Catholic men, including priests.

"The organization's national board of Directors also includes a Catholic, Michael Timmis of Grosse Point, Michigan, McCartney pointed out.

"The bishops' position, contained in a 1996 position paper prepared by its Committee on Marriage and Family, indicates that Catholics may participate in Promise Keepers' events. The conferences, the paper suggests, may 'be filling a spiritual and pastoral vacuum' in the lives of some Catholic men and challenged church leaders to develop programs to meet those needs.

Bishop Henry J. Mansell, of the Buffalo Catholic Diocese, said Friday that "Catholics are free to attend the Promise Keepers' Conference."

"It is his hope that after the conference there will be follow-up experiences in their home parishes," said Monsignor David M. Lee, diocesan director of communications.

"McCartney said for Catholic men and other Christians, there are only two criteria for attending the conference: Do you love Jesus and have you been born of the Spirit of Jesus Christ?

"I believe Promise Keepers is the vehicle God has created to bring down barriers in Western New York," said Rev. Dean Weaver, pastor of Knox Presbyterian Church in Kenmore, during the news conference.

"In addition to more than a dozen ministers who appeared with McCartney at the news conference, the Promise Keepers' gathering was endorsed earlier Friday by Monsignor James E. Wall, vicar for priests for the Catholic diocese and director of the St. Columban Retreat Center, Derby.

"To help Catholic men prepare for the conference, Monsignor Wall said he will celebrate a mass at 2 p.m. June 13 at Our Lady of the Sacred heart Church, S. 3148 Abbott Road, Orchard Park."—*Dave Condren, News Religion Reporter, Buffalo (New York) News, May 17, 1997.*

Not once has the false sacramental gospel of Romanism been plainly exposed in any Promise Keepers' conference. Promise Keepers' leaders go to Roman Catholic churches and seminaries and speak at Catholic-sponsored men's meetings. They never expose Rome's blasphemies at such meetings—or anywhere else. They never warn the Catholic participants that Rome's false gospel is cursed of God.

Mike Timmis, the Roman Catholic, mentioned in the above-quoted Buffalo article, spoke at the May 31-June 2, 1997, Catholic Men's Conference at the Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio. This staunch Roman Catholic institution holds annual conferences, defending the pagan teaching that Mary is the sinless Queen of Heaven, through whom alone we can find access to God's forgiveness.

The same brochure which announced that 1997 Steubenville conference also announced the "*Mary, Mercy, and the Eucharist Conference.*" A photo accompanying the announcement pictures a Catholic priest holding a rosary, imploring the Virgin's aid. Another announcement in the brochure describes a planned pilgrimage to Lourdes, a Mary-worship shrine in France.

This Franciscan University is firmly committed to strong traditional Catholic doctrinal teachings. The head of that school, priest Michael Scanlan, is forward in promoting Catholic evangelization of Protestants in America. He was a leading figure at the *North American Congress on the Holy Spirit and World Evangelization* in New Orleans, July 1997, as well as at its predecessor, the one

held in Indianapolis in August 1990. (They purposely scheduled the national event to occur only one month after our General Conference Session in that city. Leading Catholic speakers from all over the nation attended.)

In Indianapolis, Scanlan told how he had been briefly jailed for taking part in an anti-abortion march and how proud he was that; while in jail, he converted several jailed Protestants to Catholicism and gave them their first Mass.

Timmis, a Detroit businessman and the Catholic representative on the PK board, believes the bread and wine of the Mass is turned into the body and blood of Christ. He believes in auricular confession. He calls the pope "holy father" and believes in papal infallibility. He prays to Mary.

The leaders of Promise Keepers have objectives; they want to unite all the churches. The Catholics working closely with the PK leaders have objectives too; they want to take over Promise Keepers.

This Steubenville, Ohio, Catholic university has been closely involved with Promise Keepers since 1995. According to the July 23, 1995, issue of *Today's Catholic*, Scanlan conducted a Mass to conclude a *Promise Keepers' Leadership Seminar* held at his university that month. More than 600 Catholic men participated.

Both in 1996 and 1997, additional Promise Keepers' leadership rallies were held at Steubenville. At these gatherings, amid candles and statues of Mary and the saints, Protestants were taught how to help the men who come to PK meetings.

At the 1997 meeting, one of the speakers was PK vice-president Dale Schlafer. Other speakers included Catholic priest Michael Scanlan and Raphael de los Reyes, director of *Radio Peace Catholic Broadcasting*.

Because of these developments, the leading evangelical magazine of our time, *Christianity Today*, declares that Promise Keepers, because of the Catholic origins of its founder and its remarkable deference to Rome, may well be the popular equivalent of Chuck Colson's Protestant-Catholic coalition.

"The movement could, for example, become

a populist incarnation of the theological call from Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT). This group of theologians and institutional leaders seeks not only to make common cause against rampant immorality of individuals and institutions, but also aspires to rethink historic Christian theological disagreements in hopes of facilitating a stronger Christian unity independent of established ecumenical efforts."—*Christianity Today*, November 17, 1997.

At this juncture, it might be well to inquire why the Franciscan University at Steubenville, Ohio, was selected as the place where the Promise Keepers/Roman Catholic dialogue and PK compromises should be worked out. Extensive advertising material is available, showing that the school is solidly conservative in its support of traditional Roman beliefs, including the adoration of Mary.

But it has one added feature: It is also charismatic. Apparently, the hierarchy decided that a charismatic Catholic center would be the best place to try to hold the first joint PK meeting at a Roman Catholic institution, and the place to ultimately work out joint agreements with PK so the Vatican could grant its full approval and support to Catholics attending regular PK meetings.

If you question why a Pentecostal flavor should be considered so important to a meeting of these diverse minds, the next chapter in this book will provide you with a better understanding.

But still more information on this changeover in PK policy is now available to us:

Promise Keepers has changed its *Statement of Faith* so it will be perfectly acceptable to Rome! How is that for coming into line! The following article appeared in *Our Sunday Visitor* on July 20, 1997:

"While there are no hard figures, some say that 10-20 percent of those men [attending Promise Keepers' conferences] are Catholic. And, recently, Promise Keepers, a largely evangelical movement, has taken steps to attract even more Catholic men to its events and principles of discipleship.

"At its March meeting, Promise Keepers' board of directors welcomed Mike Timmis as a new member. A Detroit-area lawyer and businessman, Timmis is a longtime leader in the Catho-

lic charismatic renewal.

“At several rallies this year, Promise Keepers has spotlighted Catholic evangelist Jim Berlucchi as a speaker.

“In June, Promise Keepers hosted a ‘Catholic Summit’ at its headquarters in Denver, sending out Catholic volunteers and leaders from around the country.

“And earlier this year, Promise keepers amended its statement of faith, revising the lines that Catholics had found offensive.

“Promise Keepers’ founder Bill McCartney told our *Sunday visitor* recently that full Catholic participation was his intention from the start.

“ ‘Back in 1992, at our first stadium event, we very clearly stated from the podium that we eagerly welcomed the participation of Roman Catholics, and we’ve had scores of Roman Catholics attend and go back to their churches excited’

“As executive director of Christian outreach at Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio, [John] Sengenberger cites Promise Keepers as the inspiration of the men’s conferences his own office has sponsored since 1995 . . .

“Sengenberger invited representatives from Promise Keepers to visit the university. ‘We had some frank discussions and told them we needed to see some Catholic involvement of the leadership level.’

“When Steubenville hosted its first men’s conference in 1995, Sengenberger invited two Promise Keepers’ officials to attend: Dale Schlafer, who was at that time chairman of the board, and Glenn Wagner, vice president.

“ ‘It was their first time in a Catholic evangelistic setting,’ Sengenberger said. ‘They were impressed. When they were leaving, we invited them to go through our bookstore and take out any books they wanted. They went home with all kinds of theology books, Vatican II teachings . . . Dale took a set of the *Liturgy of the Hours*. The following year, he told me he’d incorporated it into his daily prayer, so Glenn asked for one, too.’

“Both men returned to Steubenville for the 1996 men’s conference, where Sengenberger took them to a eucharistic holy hour.

“ ‘I took them aside and explained what we were doing, how this only makes sense if you believe in the real presence of Jesus. That night we were down by the stage, and I remember going down on my knees, then prostrate, down on my face—and right next to me was Glenn Wagner, doing the same thing.’

“Yet profound differences remained between the evangelicals of Promise Keepers and Catholics who were sympathetic. Last Year, Promise Keepers published a ‘statement of faith’ with lines that seemed to be crafted to exclude Catholics—or force them to reject their Catholic faith.

“Section five of the Promise Keepers’ credo read: ‘We believe that man was created in the image of God, but because of sin, was alienated from God. That alienation can be removed only by accepting, through faith alone, God’s gift of salvation, which was made possible by Christ’s death.’

“ ‘Faith alone’ is a key doctrine of the Protestant Reformation. Though the phrase appears nowhere in Scripture, it was inserted by Martin Luther in his German translation of the Bible.

“Concerned about this development at Promise Keepers, Sengenberger had several Catholic theologians review the statement and present their objections to Wagner last summer.

“Early this year, Promise Keepers revised the statement in a way that passed theological muster with those Catholics. ‘Only through faith, trusting in Christ alone for salvation, which was made possible by His death and resurrection, can that alienation be removed.’

“Paul Edward, Promise Keepers’ vice president for advancement, explained that the statement of faith is a ‘dynamic’ document, and that Promise Keepers is open for change.

“ ‘Truth and unity are equal, but in tension,’ said Edwards, who was raised a Catholic but now attends a nondenominational church. ‘We try to present truth, not washed down, yet not truth that devolves into denominational squabbles.’ ”—Mike Aquilina, *Our Sunday Visitor*, July 20, 1997, pp. 10-11.

For over a century, *Our Sunday Visitor* has been the leading Roman Catholic weekly magazine in the United States. In the above article, you have discovered the inside facts of what is really happening inside Promise Keepers! Mark these points well, as noted in the above *Our Sunday Visitor* report:

- In 1995 when the Franciscan University hosted its first men’s conference, two of the top PK officials were invited to attend and did so. One was Dale Schlafer, chairman of the board; the other was Glenn Wagner, a vice-president.
- The article implies that this led to the acceptance by one or both men to portions of

the Catholic faith and practice.

1 - After being given free Catholic doctrinal books, at least one PK official (Schlafer) began basing his personal prayers on them.

2 - Both officials attended the 1996 Catholic men's conference, during which they were taken to a special Eucharistic Holy Hour which included the pagan Mass.

3 - One PK official (Wagner) was so impressed, he fell prostrate on his face that night alongside Sengenberger.

- In 1996, Promise Keepers published a *Statement of Faith*, outlining its basic doctrinal beliefs. Catholic church officials went over it carefully and did not like part of it.

- In early 1997, top PK leaders were invited to Franciscan University for "frank discussions" with leaders of the Roman hierarchy, at which time the Catholics made several demands.

- Shortly thereafter, the board of Promise Keepers met and agreed to each of their requirements, if PK was to meet Vatican approval:

1 - The demand had been made that the PK Statement of Belief must be changed in wording, to agree with professed (but not actual) Roman Catholic teachings! By board action, the basic PK doctrinal statement was changed.

3 - At its March 1997 board meeting, the directors of Promise Keepers voted Mike Timmis, "a long-time leader in the Catholic charismatic renewal" onto the PK board. (Later in this present report, we shall learn that Promise Keepers has a very close relationship with the Protestant charismatic churches as well.)

4 - Jim Berlucchi, a leading Catholic evangelist, was quickly added as a PK speaker, and has already addressed the crowds at "several rallies" in 1997. (By definition, a "revivalist" tries to encourage the members of his own church; an "evangelist" is working to make converts of non-members.)

5 - In June, 1997, a "Catholic Summit" meeting was held at PK headquarters in Denver, to which zealous Roman Catholics, hand-picked by the Catholic hierarchy, were brought together for discussions as to how they could help in counseling, or otherwise, at forthcoming PK stadium rallies.

- McCartney was interviewed by the *Sunday Visitor* and told them that "full Catholic participation" in the rallies was his studied objective.

- McCartney said he was careful to send Catholics who were attending his rallies back to their own churches. No attempt is made to remove them from that evil religious system.

- Commenting on the readiness to change their doctrinal position to agree with Catholicism, Paul Edwards, a PK vice-president, said their doctrines are "dynamic"—and do not include "truth that devolves into denominational squabbles." What then does PK believe?

Now add to the above points the added point quoted earlier from the New York *Buffalo News* news clip for May 17, 1997. In a report on an upcoming Promise Keepers' meeting in that city, some of the above points were mentioned, as well as this one:

- In the city where the next PK stadium rally is held, a Roman Catholic Mass is said on the preceding Sunday. This is done in order to sanctify the gathering for the attending Catholic men.

This trend to unite PK with the policies of Rome is disturbing to thinking Protestants:

"Since the [April 1996] Atlanta gathering, a Roman Catholic has joined the PK board. Catholics accounted for an estimated 5 percent of those at [the October 1997] Stand in the Gap [in Washington, D.C.]

"PK's general welcoming attitude toward Catholics caused several conservative Protestant denominations to warn their members to beware of its ecumenical goals."—*Christianity Today*, November 17, 1997.

The Charismatic Connection

There is a reason why the leadership of Promise Keepers feels so much at home with both the Catholics and the Charismatics.

Promise Keepers is a men's movement started in 1990 by members of John Wimber's Vineyard Fellowship. Those Vineyard Churches practice a type of Pentecostalism, with a very strong flair for Celebration-type worships. University of Colorado football coach Bill McCartney was raised a Roman Catholic. In the late 1980s, he began attending the Boulder Valley Vineyard Church located in Longmont, Colorado. Liking the preaching of the pastor, James Ryle, McCartney kept attending it. He still attends it, although there is no indication that he ever severed connections with the Roman Catholic Church, and no hint that he ever considered it to be teaching false doctrine.

Promise Keepers was founded by McCartney and Ryle in 1990. Here is the remarkable story behind how it came into existence:

In the Forward to James Ryle's book, *A Dream Comes True*, McCartney provides this historical background:

"Our relationship [McCartney and Ryle's] developed as the result of a remarkable dream that James shared with me prior to the 1989 college football season while I was head coach at the University of Colorado. The dream foretold that our team, the Colorado Buffaloes, would have a golden season resulting in being ranked number one in the nation and that I, as head coach, would be given the Coach of the Year honors at the season's conclusion . . .

"The season unfolded and gave us more than our share of thrills as we watched with wonder how God seemed to be proving the dream true with each successive game. A deep bond of brotherhood was forged between James and me in

those joyful moments of seeing the hand of the Lord bless us . . .

"That unforgettable season did much to turn my heart toward God with greater sensitivity to hearing His voice. If God would speak in a dream about a football season, what other more pressing matters might He address if we would only listen? The vision for Promise Keepers became more believable to me as a result of learning to regard the thoughts and impressions which come into the lives from God."—*Bill McCartney, Forward to A Dream Come True, pp. 8-9.*

McCartney moved to Boulder in 1982, where he transformed the hapless Buffaloes of the University of Colorado. But first, he had to struggle through some miserable losing seasons (including a 1-10 record in 1984). Gradually, though, he put together a winning streak, leading to a spectacular 1989 season that earned him five national Coach of the Year honors and culminated in beating Notre Dame at the Orange Bowl in 1991. In that year he signed a remarkable 15-year contract with Colorado, worth \$400,000 in a good year, plus bonuses.

Ryle had been appointed chaplain of the team in the late 1980s. Obviously, McCartney was impressed with Ryle's dream, related to him as the 1989 football season was about to begin,—for when the prediction came true, the coach gained national fame and wealth. The two men became close friends.

As mentioned above, Ryle was pastor of a Vineyard Church. The Vineyard movement was founded by John Wimber, and there are now over 400 local Vineyard churches in North America. They have been at the forefront of promoting a combination of Charismatic ex-

citement and end-times prophecy.

A uniting of tongues babble, prophecies, and dreams has formed a part of the Pentecostal movement since its inception at the beginning of the 20th century. But the Vineyard churches have carried the visions and dreams to something of an extreme. They believe that God is regularly giving visions and dreams to their members. So whenever a member claims to have a message from God, the rest consider it sacred truth. This, of course, can lead to all kinds of fanaticism.

Among the Vineyard beliefs is the teaching that miracles and visions will sweep the world just prior to the return of Christ. As you can see, they will fully be ready for the great deceptive, miracle-working, power of Satan in the Final Crisis, as soon as the National Sunday Law is enacted! Indeed, they will be first to embrace and be part of the fanatical storm which will arise.

Yet this is the background in which Promise Keepers was born and reared; and this controls its board to this day.

Many of the charismatic prophets believe this final revival has already begun, and they point to the "signs" connected with the "laughing revival" and other wild activities manifested in Toronto and Pensacola, and entering many denominations.

The emphasis on ever-changing beliefs—resulting from the latest visions and dreams—produces a reduced concern for doctrinal purity. If a person is having a vision or dream, then he is accepted as a brother, whether he is a Protestant, Catholic, or Mormon. Out of such a background, Promise Keepers grew.

Indeed, James Ryle and Bill McCartney declare that Promise Keepers began because of Vineyard dreams!

During the latter half of 1989, at the height of the Kansas City Prophets nationwide tour of Vineyard Christian Fellowship, Vineyard pastor James Ryle had three dreams.

One of them, he told McCartney, predicted that a great revival was to begin. We will note the key points in two of those three dreams later in this present report.

You are acquainted with the logical clarity

and sweet beauty of Spirit of Prophecy visions. Here is an example from a Vineyard Prophet. In the late 1980s, Ryle dreamed that he saw a hippopotamus stumbling around in a beautiful garden. When he awoke, he was told by the spirit that it meant that a mighty revival was soon to sweep the world.

"A vast prophetic movement inspired by the Holy Spirit within the church and a validated prophetic message preached through the church in the midst of the world resulting in an evangelistic gathering—that is the '*hippo in the midst of the garden*' . . . The prophetic movement will surely be established in the midst of the church, like a hippo in the midst of a garden . . . The hippo in the garden is the indefinable, unexplained, strange and extraordinary work of God! Yet, though it seems so out of place, it nevertheless is exactly what the Lord wants. The hippo is His pet, and it is here to stay."—James Ryle, *Hippo in the Garden*, pp. 262, 291-292.

The utterly ridiculous imagery and logic of this "spirit prediction" is foolish in the extreme, yet McCartney was quite willing to believe it. Did he not regularly listen to such mummery at the Vineyard Church at each Sunday morning and Wednesday night meeting?

By going back, week after week, to the Vineyard Church, McCartney was preparing himself for still greater deceptions! We must not go where error is wont to be taught!

Ryle's book, *Hippo in the Garden*, is filled with alleged "words from the Lord" which he and others are supposed to have received.

A later 1995 book of his, *A Dream Come True: A Biblical Look at How God Speaks through Dreams and Visions*, contained even more of Ryle's "prophetic dreams." On the back cover of it is a recommendation by McCartney:

"James Ryle takes his unique ability for explaining truth and applies it to the mysterious and often misunderstood subject of dreams and visions."

McCartney also wrote the Forward to this second book, which we quoted from a few paragraphs earlier.

Here is what Ryle believes about dreams and visions in his own life, as well in the lives of others, in these last days:

"There have been many occasions in my own

life when the Lord has given significant insight to me through a dream or vision. These prophetic dreams deal sometimes with the church, with a nation or with leaders in the church. At other times the revelation focused on a more personal level.”—Ryle, *Hippo in the Garden*, p. 125.

“Though we have looked at the patriarchs and the prophets, God does not exclude Himself to them alone. He is rich in mercy to all who call upon Him. The standing orders of the universe, unrescinded and unopposed, echo throughout the ages—‘Let there be light!’ There is no class of person exempt from the probing love of God who longs to reveal Himself to man, whether we be awake or asleep. Young and old, male and female, bond and free, rich and poor alike may all meet with the Lord in the wondrous world of dreams and visions.”—Ryle, *A Dream Come True*, p. 111.

Ryle says he and others are regularly having “prophetic dreams and visions.” He calls them “revelations from God.”

In order to find antecedents for his strange dreams, he cites Catholics such as Augustine (*A Dream Come True*, p. 159), Jerome (p. 158), Thomas Aquinas (p. 165), Saint Benedict (p. 198), and even Saint Nicholas (pp. 129-131).

“If you believe God speaks in dreams and visions, and your heart longs for Him to speak to you—ask Him to do so!”—Ryle, *A Dream Come True*, p. 200.

Ryle says he has made most of his key decisions as a result of “prophetic dreams and visions” which were given to him.

- He says he was called to preach because of one (*Hippo in the Garden*, p. 91).

- He says he was told in a dream to associate his church with John Wimber and the Vineyard movement (*Hippo*, p. 27).

- He says it was a dream which caused him to stay in the Boulder, Colorado, area in the late 1980s. He had been planning to move elsewhere. But, because he remained there, he met Bill McCartney (*Dream Come True*, pp. 41-43).

- He says that, in 1989, he had a dream that the University of Colorado football team would have a winning season (*Hippo*, p. 181). When this dream was fulfilled, McCartney decided Ryle was a special messenger of God, and this established their very close friend-

ship (*McCartney, Forward, A Dream Come True*).

- Ryle claims that he had a dream which predicted the success of the Promise Keepers’ movement (*Dream Come True*, pp. 192-193).

- He said that John Wimber dreamed about him in 1989 and authorized him, Ryle, as a special messenger of God, as a “seer in prophetic growth and ministry” (*Hippo*, pp. 12-13).

- Since then, Ryle says he has had a “frequency, scope, accuracy and fulfillment of dreams, visions and prophetic words which has been staggering” (*ibid.*).

Earlier in this report, we quoted McCartney’s statement about how it was that dream that convinced him that Ryle was more than a pastor; he was a prophet of God. McCartney consults Ryle and others on his Vineyard dream team before making any important decisions about the activities or teachings of Promise Keepers.

Mention was made earlier of three dreams by Ryle in 1989. Here is more information on them. It is these three dreams that laid the basis for McCartney’s decision to start Promise Keepers.

Three men attending the Kansas City Vineyard Church had received so many dreams that they were told by the spirits to travel the country and share them at other Vineyard churches. At the height of this nationwide tour of the *Kansas City Prophets* (who called themselves the “*Vineyard Christian Fellowship*”), James Ryle had three dreams, each involving the Beatles. He had probably eaten too much the night before.

When he awoke from each dream, he claimed that “God interpreted them for me.”

By February 1990, Ryle was telling his “Beatles dreams” to his flock at the Boulder Valley Vineyard Church in Longmont, Colorado. Because Ryle’s earlier dream had predicted a winning streak for the McCartney’s football team the previous year, McCartney was eager to hear about the latest dreams and Ryle’s interpretations of them.

Unbelievably, it was in this setting that Promise Keepers was born.

These three dreams were supposedly from

God, and told Ryle that the “divine anointing” which had previously been on the Beatles was now to be transferred to another organization somewhere else—and that it would result in a worldwide revival!

As Ryle explained it, the “anointing” would fall upon a group or organization which used revival-usher music. Actually, this concept was not new; for the so-called “K.C. Prophets” who were traveling from one Vineyard church to another had also, under the guidance of the spirits, been foretelling a similar great revival to begin soon, which would include high-powered music at its meetings.

According to Ryle, in the dreams, God had previously given this “anointing” exclusively to the Beatles, so they could usher in this worldwide revival. But, because of their ongoing feuds with one another (no mention made of their terrible music and other perversions), God had taken the “anointing” away from them in 1970, and was reserving it for a later group which would be as “Christian” as the Beatles had been when they started.

These later revivalists were, in the dream, given the name of “*Sons of Thunder*.”

Those of you who are acquainted with medieval demonology will recall that the thunderbolt was one of the symbols of Satan, and that three slightly curved vertical lines together (one of several forms of the 666 symbol) represented his kingdom in its perfection.

So “sons (plural) of thunder” was but a variant of that Dark Ages symbology. When Jesus called James and John the “sons of thunder,” He was not complementing them! (See *Desire of Ages*, 295:5). It was a quality to be abandoned, not bragged about.

According to Ryle’s dreams, the “sons of thunder” would produce a worldwide revival in the 1990s. In November 1990, at a “*Harvest Conference*” of Vineyard representatives in Denver, with “K.C. Prophet” Rick Joyner, Ryle, in a message entitled, “*Sons of Thunder*,” shared again the details of his dreams that the mantle of revival, earlier given by God to the Beatles, was to be transferred very soon to some other organization (the “Sons of Thunder”) which would use preaching and Vineyard-type music to produce a worldwide revival which would bring all Christians together.

“Isaiah 21:6 is a verse that the Lord quickened to me at the outset of this year, and this is what it says: ‘This is what the Lord says to me: ‘Go post a lookout and have him report what he sees.’ ’ And what I’m going to tell you right now is three separate dreams that the Lord gave me over a period of several months. And I say that up front because I want you to realize that what you’re about to hear is not the fruit of zealous immaturity. This is something that has been thought out, it’s been prayed over, it’s been examined, it’s been investigated, scrutinized, and laid before the Lord and shared with others who are certainly more esteemed than I am in these types of seeings and it has, to this point, stood the test. And so I am confident in saying this much, that the Lord, to a degree, has appointed me as a lookout and shown me some things and I want to show you and tell you what he showed me.”—*James Ryle, Harvest Conference, Denver, Colorado, November 1990.*

Just before Ryle spoke, Rick Joyner (one of the three “K.C. Prophets”) was building the audience up to an intensity of expectation, in preparation for Ryle’s revelation of his prophetic dreams. Joyner said:

“We’ve had a lot of concepts about evangelism, and I think the Lord is going to change some of them.”

Minutes later, Ryle began describing one of his three dreams:

“A light shines from above and there’s a woman standing in the midst of the church, and she stands up and she begins singing this song under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. And the song had one sentence that she kept singing over and over. And the song was this: ‘In the name of Jesus Christ the Lord we say unto you: Be saved!’ And she would just start singing that, she would sing it up to that part of the balcony, and I started watching, and it was like wind blowing on a wheat field. The people in that whole section just began to swoon under the presence of the Holy Spirit, and many of them would collapse into their seats, sobbing, proclaiming, ‘Jesus is Lord.’ ”

“And then she would sing it over here, ‘In the name of Jesus Christ the Lord we say unto you: Be saved!’ and salvation was spontaneously and sovereignly happening all over that place. And that was the end of the dream.

“[After waking up] the Lord showed me some things, and I submit these to you for your prayer and consideration and discussion. But this is the thing that he showed me.”—*Ibid.*

Here is a second of his three “divinely in-

spired” dreams. Like all the other dreams of the “Vineyard Prophets,” it is utter foolishness:

“It looked like a *Sergeant Peppers Hearts Club* jacket . . . It looked like a military jacket, and it started floating back and I knew that represented the anointing, the mantle, the covering that was coming to the ‘Sons of Thunder.’ ”—*Ryle, Harvest Conference, November 1990.*

The spirits told Ryle that the “jacket” represented the mantle of Elijah, which was now to be passed from the Beatles to new prophets, speakers, and musicians who would soon launch this worldwide revival.

When, several months earlier, McCartney first heard about these three dreams, he was spellbound. Had not Ryle’s dream about his 1989 football victories come true?

On March 20, 1990, while driving in a car with a friend, the thought came to McCartney “as in a vision,” that he should try to fill a stadium with Christian men—and that it might be a partial fulfillment of James Ryle’s predictions.

Records show that Promise Keepers is a men’s movement started, in 1990, by members of John Wimber’s Vineyard Fellowship. The first president of Promise Keepers (and still the president today), Randy Phillips, has been a faithful member of Ryle’s Boulder Vineyard Church all these years. Other Vineyard men also hold key positions.

All of these people live in a religious climate of peculiar dreams and inappropriate interpretations. We believe they come through the power of Satan. The God of heaven never “anointed” the Beatles, their attire, nor their worldly music. He does not give visions about sports jackets floating in the air, as representing a forthcoming “worldwide revival.” Read again *Great Controversy*, chapter 27. Modern revivals are keyed to emotionalism, with little said about obedience to the Ten Commandments and nothing said about the Fourth Commandment. By their lives, their words, and their fruit ye shall know them.

The background is not hidden, but is known even by the news media.

“The Vineyard movement and its charismatic orientation has a commanding influence on PK. McCartney; his pastor, James Ryle; and PK presi-

dent Randy Phillips are all part of the Vineyard movement.

“Indeed, the wellsprings of PK’s approach to ecclesiastical and theological issues come in part from its leaders’ association with the Vineyard, [which was] brought to prominence by author and pastor John Wimber. The Vineyard has 88,600 adherents in 422 U.S. churches.

“Some key Vineyard characteristics that mark PK as well include:

- Suspicion of large bureaucratic institutions.
- Passionate openness to current activity of the Holy Spirit.
- A tactical, rather than strategic, approach to an organization’s growth and development.”—*Christianity Today, November 17, 1997.*

“McCartney’s Vineyard-inspired understanding of a congregation views it as a dynamic entity, operating under the power of the Holy Spirit. PK carries on in much the same way.”—*Christianity Today, November 17, 1997.*

By 1994, Promise Keepers was gaining in momentum. Members of evangelical churches throughout North America were flocking to the stadium meetings. In February of that year, James Ryle, one of the directors on the board of Promise Keepers, wrote an article for *Charisma* magazine (published by the same printing house as the PK journal, *New Man*), entitled “*The New Sound of Music.*”

“We will see musicians who are anointed by God and gifted with even greater ability than the Beatles . . . These musicians will not fail to glorify God, and therein will be the secret of their success.”—*James Ryle, Charisma, February 1994, p. 14.*

But the following year, Bill Randles, a Pentecostal pastor in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, wrote an article, “*An Open Letter to Bill McCartney,*” in which he revealed the dreamy Vineyard origins of Promise Keepers.

Here is part of what Randles wrote:

“Frankly, Mr. McCartney, another huge reservation that I am having with PK is the fact that James Ryle, a man who claims that God told him the Beatles were anointed to bring forth a worldwide revival and ‘usher in my (God’s) spirit,’ is your pastor and mentor. According to Ryle, it wasn’t until 1970 that God removed his anointing from the Beatles. (*Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* was anointed by God? 1970 was the year the Beatles broke up!) I am leery of

a 'prophet' who discerns the demonic as anointed."—*Bill Randles, An Open Letter to Bill McCartney, 1995.*

Ever since the widespread publication of that open letter, Promise Keepers has tried to downplay their origins. Yet at no time has there been any apology or expression of repentance on the part of McCartney, Ryle, or the PK organization they are directors of—that God has appointed James Ryle as a lookout to declare to everyone that he had been assigned the responsibility of announcing this worldwide-revival-ushering Beatles "anointing" to a new 1990's organization. Ryle wrote this in 1991:

"The Lord spoke to me [Ryle] and said, 'What you saw in the Beatles—the lifting up and that sound that they had—was from Me.' It did not belong to them; it belonged to Me. And it was My purpose to bring forth through music a worldwide revival that would usher in the move of My spirit in bringing men and women to Christ . . .

"And the Lord said, 'Now I'm looking for those who I can place that anointing back upon. And as surely as I place it upon 'em [sic.], they will come forth with a sound that is distinctive, that will turn the heads of men and women and capture their hearts.'

"And in response to me asking, 'What's it doing here?' Suddenly the Lord stood me in the midst of a church and He showed me the woman who was the church herself standing in the midst of the world singing under the anointing of the Holy Spirit a simple but powerful word, 'In the

name of Jesus Christ the Lord we say unto you: Be saved!'"—*James Ryle, Harvest Conference, November 1990.*

"Here's the provocative thing that the Lord said that day as I prayed and sought for an understanding on this dream—the Lord said that He had called those 'four lads from Liverpool' to Himself. There was a call from God on their lives, they were gifted by His hand, and it was He who anointed them. The Lord had a purpose for them and it was to usher in the charismatic renewal with musical revival around the world."—*James Ryle, "Sons of Thunder," The Morning Star Prophetic Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 4, Winter 1991.*

Ryle has frequently spoken at Promise Keepers' stadium meetings. In February 1996, at the Clergy Conference in Atlantia, Georgia, he urged the men to have city-wide meetings where "denominational distinctives are set aside. Unity is based on our love for Jesus. It is like the Trinity: organic unity."

In the dreams, the spirits are telling the Vineyard preachers that all distinctive doctrines must be set aside, so the love of Jesus can flow through and out of Christians everywhere.

In addition to the derogatory remarks about "doctrine," the seemingly endless hugging, intimate vows to strangers, psychobabble speakers up front, ecumenism, and total acceptance of Mormonism and Catholicism, there is the music.

"The end is near. The children of light are to work with earnest, persevering zeal to lead others to prepare for the great event before us, that they may be able to resist the enemy because they have allowed the Holy Spirit to work upon their hearts. New and strange things will continually arise to lead God's people into false excitement, religious revivals, and curious developments."

— 2 Selected Messages, 17

The Rock Music Connection

Because the Charismatics like their religion wild, rock music has become a part of the Promise Keepers' stadium rallies.

The Promise Keepers Men's Conference in Memphis, Tennessee, on October 11-12, 1996, was one of 22 such conferences that year.

The Liberty Bowl stadium was filled almost to capacity. More than 52,000 registered in advance at \$60 per person. That is nearly a third of a million dollars to Promise Keepers for just one of the 22 rallies!

Yet that is only the income from the advance registration tickets! The fee for those paying on the day of the conference was \$70 per person, and Promise Keepers announced that it was expecting more than \$3 million would be generated that weekend through ticket sales alone. Add to that all the souvenir items and food sold.

The assembled men heard ecumenical speakers, pastors of a variety of denominations, youth speakers, and trained counselors, as well as Dennis Agajanian's band and the "Maranatha! Promise" Band. The "Youth Break Out" speaker was Miles McPherson.

The Memphis *Commercial Appeal* newspaper commented on the Friday night session, that "the stage, with its lights and television screens and towering stacks of speakers, looked fit for a modern-day rock concert."

And when the music started, it sounded like a modern rock concert! That was because of the type of music played. The sound is sometimes nearly deafening. But the men cheer and love it, and it pushes up their emotions for the "get rid of doctrines" and "unite

the churches" messages which follow.

Because the leadership of Promise Keepers is closely allied with the Pentecostals, those who attend their rallies learn to like the bouncy Celebration church style, and the hyper-emotionalism of the charismatics.

A growing trend, since Amy Grant "crossed over" to secular markets, is to gradually intersperse secular rock songs with "religious rock" (which was already terrible enough). For example, at one Promise Keepers' stadium rally, Dennis Agajanian, a rock guitarist and singer from California, arrived complete with his drums and bass, sway and swivel,—even when presenting old hymns like *Nothing but the Blood*, and *There is a Fountain*. One would think he was an Elvis impersonator. The whole stadium at times seemed to shake with vibration and the shouts and screams of men, as the singer, with contorted face and frenzied motions, appeared demon-like in appearance.

In order to avoid finger-pointing at the fact they are Charismatic preachers, these men, in their sermons and books, vilify anyone who would speak against any religious practice or denomination.

"Come on, you Bible-believing Baptists, how do you really feel about those holy-rolling charismatics (and vice versa)? And you faithful Anglicans, what do you think about those ambiguous house churches? We need not to ask Pentecostals the questions because, as we all know, they're the only ones going to heaven anyway, unless, of course, you discuss this with a Nazarene . . . Now how about you traditional Lutherans and Presbyterians: Have you invited any liberal Methodists over for dinner lately? Dare I mention the Catholics? and you passion-

ate Evangelicals, come on and tell us the real story about those flamboyant Assemblies of God pastors . . . We are so filled with opinion, criticism, debate, legalism and harsh judgments that we are unlikely to hear a word from God—even if He shouted it from heaven.”—James Ryle, *A Hippo in the Garden*, pp. 33-34.

This is what Ryle thinks about sound doctrine, and it is parroted by the staff and speakers of Promise Keepers. The charismatic prophetic crowd mocks those who would believe something and stand in defense of it.

According to them, Christians are no longer to contend for the faith delivered unto them; they are to ignore the command given through Timothy to allow “no other doctrine” but that given them of God (*1 Timothy 1:3*).

“Now, who is right and who is wrong? That is not the question we are to concern ourselves over. The question before us always is, ‘Do you love the Lord with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself?’ for according to Jesus, this is the sum of the law and the prophets. Love is patient and kind; it does not exalt itself, nor does it push its own preferences . . . Denominations are at war with each other be-

cause they are not walking in love.”—James Ryle, *A Dream Come True*, p. 179.

Ryle was explaining his “windmill vision” when he wrote the above words. It is so important, he says, he has “shared this vision with pastors and church leaders across the nation” (*op. cit.*, p. 178).

He said he saw a windmill in the middle of a field and “the Holy Spirit said” to him, “This is a parable showing the nine elements that are essential for the church to fulfill its purpose in the world.” The first element is that the church must be rooted and grounded in love. *Because they place doctrine first, “this is why the Holy Spirit does not move powerfully in some churches.* The lack of love would cause the church to collapse under the weight of God’s presence.” Therefore, according to Ryle, the Second Advent cannot occur until we homogenize all our doctrines into one.

We can surely agree that, when the churches decide that only one teaching matters—Sundaykeeping will be that teaching—and then the coming of the wicked one in signs and wonders will occur.

“The danger that threatens our churches is that new and strange things will be brought in, things that confuse the minds of the people, and give them no strength, at the very time when they most need strength in spiritual things. Clear discernment is needed that things new and strange shall not be laid alongside of truth as a part of the burden of the message to be given at this time. The very messages we have been giving to the world are to be made prominent.”

— 2 Selected Messages, 14

Promise Keepers Today

By late 1997, Promise Keepers has become a gigantic religious force to be reckoned with on the American scene.

Here are several comments from three national journals—*Time*, *Newsweek*, and *Christianity Today*—on the status of Promise Keepers today. They will provide you with a glimpse of the immense size and scope that Promise Keepers has achieved in just seven years:

“By bus and train, by chartered jet and Harley, even by bicycle they came, by the hundreds of thousands, to bow down before God. And if their leader’s vision is true, their journey is just beginning. It will end, believes Promise Keepers’ founder Bill McCartney, in nothing less than the spiritual revival of America—perhaps of the world. Men, touched by the spirit of God, will re-create society in the image of their faith: ‘You’re going to see them move across the community unlike you’ve ever seen, and connect in ways in which they have not connected.’”—*Newsweek*, October, 13, 1997.

“Promise Keepers *Stand in the Gap*, the ‘sacred assembly of men’ in Washington, D.C., although no official tally was made, the October 4 event appeared to be the biggest D.C. gathering ever.”—*Christianity Today*, November 17, 1997.

“As Musician Steve Green sang, ‘Let the Walls Fall Down,’ a 15-year-old messianic Jewish boy, his prayer shawl draped over his head, clasped hands with a pot-bellied baby boomer wearing an Oakland Raiders cap.”—*Christianity Today*, November 17, 1997.

“McCartney used the event as a launching pad for two historic initiatives. First, he plans to take the PK organization and its trademark stadium events worldwide. Second, PK is calling for large gatherings of Christian men to assemble on the

steps of every U.S. state capital on January 1, 2000.”—*Christianity Today*, November 17, 1997.

“In North America, meanwhile, PK announced that 37 stadium gatherings will be held during the next two years without charge—9 of them exclusively for pastors, both male and female.”—*Christianity Today*, November 17, 1997.

“[Promise Keepers] claims that 2.6 million men have attended its regional rallies.”—*Newsweek*, October, 13, 1997.

“The day after *Stand in the Gap*, McCartney reiterated PK’s expansive agenda, saying on NBC’s *Meet the Press*, ‘I believe God is showing us now that He wants us to go global. How that unfolds is anybody’s guess.’”—*Christianity Today*, November 17, 1997.

“A *Washington Post* poll pegged the *Stand in the Gap* gathering as 80 percent white, 14 percent black, and 2 percent Asian.”—*Christianity Today*, November 17, 1997.

“PK’s massive success at *Stand in the Gap* has transported this men’s movement from the religious margins quickly into the national debate over America’s cultural destiny at the turn of the millennium.”—*Christianity Today*, November 17, 1997.

“The seven-year-old organization boasts annual revenues of \$87 million, a two-story brick headquarters in Denver and 360 paid staff members.”—*Time*, October 6, 1997.

In [the book] *Promise Keepers: The Third Wave of the American Religious Right*, co-authors Alfred Ross and Lee Corkorinos, of the Center for Democracy Studies, write:

“‘In its conception and execution, Promise Keepers is one of the most sophisticated political movements the right wing has yet conjured up.’”—*Time*, October 6, 1997.

“Certainly, it’s possible that, at some point, the [Promise Keepers’] leaders will be seduced by politics and will decide to put their massive mailing list to some partisan political use. And

it’s inevitable that political gurus from the far right will try to tempt their flock.”—*Newsweek*, October, 13, 1997.

“Before the final visitation of God’s judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times . . .

“The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work; and before the time for such a movement shall come, he will endeavor to prevent it by introducing a counterfeit. In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power he will make it appear that God’s special blessing is poured out; there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest. Multitudes will exult that God is working marvelously for them, when the work is that of another spirit. Under a religious guise, Satan will seek to extend his influence over the Christian world.”

— *Great Controversy*, 464

Appendix 1: An Earlier Report on Promise Keepers

The following report was prepared in the late spring of 1986, and complements quite well the preceding portion of this book. This data could have been combined with that which preceded it, but it was felt the clear impact of the latest findings about Promise Keepers' ecumenical, Catholic, and Charismatic connections would have been weakened by so doing.

So here, in concise format, is this additional information on Promise Keepers.

L.J. Popovich, pastor of the Rapid City, South Dakota, Church of the Nazarine, declares:

"Promise Keepers is the best hope for a Holy Ghost revival in America!"—*Rapid City Journal, April 22, 1995.*

Head of the local chapter of Promise Keepers International, he gives its promotion all his spare time.

Do not underestimate Promise Keepers. Careful observers of the religious scene declare it to be the first time, since the days of John the Revelator (A.D. 95), that one organization has successfully bridged the gap between nearly all forms of Christianity, won them over to its side, and actively obtained their full cooperation!

Fundamentalists, Protestants of nearly all types, Catholics, Pentecostals, and even Mormons are jumping on board. Yes, and even Seventh-day Adventist churches, as well.

This is the story of Promise Keepers, an organization to keep your eye on. It could become a key means of bringing all the churches together, and binding them in the bundle, in preparation for the National Sunday Law crisis.

The year was 1990. Bill McCartney, well-known head football coach at University of Colorado, was driving from Denver to Pueblo, Colorado, to speak at a luncheon. McCartney expressed his concern to see some kind of organization started, which could get men into more active rolls at home and church.

At the luncheon, he noticed that some fathers had attended with their sons, and he wondered how he could get men meeting together in their own Christian meetings.

McCartney attends the Boulder Valley, Colorado, Vineyard Church, which has some unusual teachings about how individuals can obtain special revelations from God. A few weeks afterward, McCartney got several men together and came up with the basic idea for Promise Keepers. They believed it was a special revelation from Heaven.

James Ryle, pastor of the church, recommended Randy Phillips, another Vineyard member, as the one to head the new organization. He has been its president ever since.

The growth of Promise Keepers has been astounding. The first conference was held at a stadium in Boulder, Colorado, in 1991.

This figure jumped to 22,000 men at the

next conference, in 1992.

In 1993, 50,000 men attended Promise Keepers' conferences.

In 1994, the number was 300,000 men at seven conferences.

In 1995, the figure swelled to 750,000.

Just one of the many conferences scheduled for 1996 will be at the JFK Stadium, in Washington, D.C. In connection with this, a million men are supposed to gather by the Washington Monument.

Every day, Promise Keepers receives about 20,000 phone calls and about 11,000 pieces of mail. The organization has over 120 full-time workers.

It is declared that this is the work of the Holy Spirit, and that it will result in the eventual conversion of the world. Soon, Phillips says, most everyone will be going to church on Sunday.

A PROMISE KEEPERS' CONFERENCE

What is a Promise Keepers' meeting like?

Announcements have been mailed out to local churches throughout the region. An immense stadium is rented for a day or two. Gradually, the stadium fills to overflowing.

Suddenly, several large beach balls are tossed in (probably by the Promise Keepers' management), and the men play at socking them around the stadium. Soon yells begin, as one side screams at the other, "We love Jesus; do you love Him too?" All over the playing field, more chairs are packed full. Then, men arise in one area and, with arms raised, shout. Several waves travel through the stands and across the central seating.

Then, a low rumble is heard. Could a thunderstorm be approaching? Everyone begins quieting down, listening. The sound grows steadily louder. Then men realize it is coming from the loud speakers. Louder and louder it becomes.

At this point, immense screens, strategically placed, light up—and a gigantic jet plane is shown taking off in a thunder of noise.

At that moment, standing at the central podium, an announcer shouts a welcome to all. "We welcome you to the flight for restored manhood!"

Roars of approval come from all over the stadium.

The men have been emotionally prepared. Excitement and screaming, such as you would find at an NFL football game, has brought everyone to a fever pitch. Now they are ready to listen closely and accept all that follows.

Another Promise Keepers' stadium conference has begun.

But what really is Promise Keepers? What is its objective? What are its teachings? Here are some facts you will want to consider and share with others:

WHO PROMOTES IT?

The strong recommendations of leading Christian speakers, such as Gary Smalley, Bill Bright, and James Dobson, have given Promise Keepers a powerful impetus.

Among them, Dobson, whose organization, Focus on the Family headquartered in nearby Colorado Springs, Colorado, has led out in urging his millions of radio listeners and supporters to fill those stadiums. Since about 70 percent of his listeners are women, they urge their husbands to attend the meetings.

Far and away, it is the women of America who are getting those stadiums filled. They get their husbands and sons to go. But, as you will learn, they do not realize what they are sending them to.

The pastors of America's churches are promoting Promise Keepers just as strongly.

It is significant that over 60,000 pastors have attended the conferences. Pastors are highly respected, and **those attending the conferences are told to trust their pastors and do whatever their pastors tell them.**

At most stadium gatherings, the pastors are asked to come forward to the podium for consecration; and, as they do so, the men are told that, when they return home, they must obey their pastors. The comment is made that only the pastors know how to rightly interpret the Word of God.

Watched by church members who attend with them, few pastors dare not go forward for the consecration service to the cause of Promise Keepers.

Getting the women and pastors on board

is part of the strategy; getting the men is the rest.

The men are told that they can elect to be either *Point Men* or *Ambassadors*.

The stadium conferences actually have three direct objectives: (1) Get the men to go back home and begin working with their pastors. (2) Motivate them to become Point Men or Ambassadors. (3) Get men's meetings started in the local churches, where Promise Keepers' books are studied.

A man who agrees to become a "*Point Man*" has the assignment of winning his local church over to full support of Promise Keepers. They keep everyone in their own congregation posted on forthcoming conferences, training seminars, and printed and taped instructional material.

"*Ambassadors*" do all that, plus more. They must also visit neighboring churches and pastors and win them over to Promise Keepers. In addition, it is their job to recruit additional Point Men. The plan is to fill all the churches with Point Men, Ambassadors, and men's groups studying recommended Promise Keepers' books.

In addition to planning for smaller local conferences, the Point Men and Ambassadors are told to, whenever possible, start these men's meetings in each home church.

It has been said, with good reason, that the local men's groups, conducted by Promise Keepers, are more dangerous than the stadium conferences are. You are about to learn why.

WHAT ARE THEIR PUBLICATIONS?

Promise Keepers does not have its own publishing house, but instead prints through other publishers—primarily Focus on the Family and NavPress, both based in Colorado, where Promise Keepers' headquarters is.

Their magazine is called *New Man*, and is published by Strang Communications, the publishers of *Charisma* magazine.

All three of these publishers are heavy on "Christian psychology" and "counseling techniques."

A key problem with Promise Keepers is that it is so eclectic that it recommends a variety of teachings, many of which are very unusual.

Yet, to date, not once has Promise Keepers decided to back down from a previously recommended doctrine or publication. As far as the Promise Keepers' leadership is concerned, many different things can be taught and officially sponsored by the organization.

Books by Robert Hicks are especially valued by Promise Keepers. He is co-founder of Life Counseling Services, in the suburbs of Philadelphia, and is professor of pastoral theology at the Seminary in the East. He is a counselor and frequent speaker on traumatic stress, inner healing, and similar psychological issues. Although highly recommended by Promise Keepers, his books contain very strange teachings.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THESE TEACHINGS?

You will be amazed when you learn some of the teachings and practices of Promise Keepers. Here is a brief overview:

NON-DENOMINATIONALISM

A key factor to the success of Promise Keepers is its ecumenical spirit. Everyone is regarded as a fellow Christian, regardless of beliefs or practices. All they have to do is declare that they are Christians, and that is enough for Promise Keepers.

No one is to be reprovved; no type of perversion is to be rejected as unchristian. This theme runs through much of what you will read below.

OBEDIENCE TO THE PASTOR AND UNITE THE CHURCHES

Everyone that comes to Promise Keepers is told to go back to his own church, obey his pastor, and do all he can to build up his church. It matters not that the pastor may be teaching error. If all concerned declare themselves as followers of Jesus, that is all that counts.

"One of the core values of Promise Keepers is honoring the pastors and priests of our local congregations."—*Geoff Gorsuch with Dan Schaffer, Brothers! Calling Men into Vital Relationships, Promise Keepers, p. 10.*

CATHOLICISM WELCOMED

"Promise Keepers doesn't care if you're Pentecostal. Do you love Jesus; are you born of the Spirit of God? Promise Keepers doesn't care if

you are Catholic. Do you love Jesus; are you born of the Spirit of God?"—*Ibid.*

These words were shouted out by founder Bill McCartney at one of the conferences. After running through a list of white, black, etc., when he got down to Catholic, there was great applause. Many Catholics are now attending Promise Keepers.

Someone will say that this is good. It is good—if Promise Keepers tries to bring those Catholics into the truth of Christianity. But instead, they are being sent back to "obey their pastor, energize their church, and make Point Men and Ambassadors."

CATHOLIC APPROVAL

Did you know that the Roman Catholic Church, through its bishops, has given its approval to Promise Keepers?

Surely, if the pope and the priests are not afraid to send Catholic men to a Promise Keepers' meeting, then why would you want to go there? Promise Keepers makes sure that nothing will be taught there which will violate Catholic doctrine or practice.

"Promise Keepers place a very strong emphasis on returning to your own church congregation or parish and becoming an active layman."—*Priest Van Liefde, of St. Hilary Catholic Church, Pico Rivera, California, quoted in Los Angeles Times, May 6, 1995.*

That statement followed a careful investigation of Promise Keepers and its conferences by Van Liefde, who did so on behalf of the Catholic hierarchy in southern California. He was assigned to this task by Cardinal Roger Mahony, archbishop of Los Angeles.

There are already instances in which Catholic parishes are holding Promise Keepers' meetings for churches in their area. Attended by men and pastors from various denominations, the speakers are Catholic priests!

Promise Keepers is doing its part to bring the churches together! It is working feverishly to this end.

Prior to the May 5-6, 1995, Promise Keepers' conference at the Los Angeles Colosseum, the official newspaper of the Los Angeles Archdiocese printed a full-page article urging its people to send their men to the conference.

Read this statement from that article:

"Promise Keepers is a basic program of evan-

gelization for men of faith, begun among more fundamentalist and evangelical Christian communities, but now being expanded to include Catholic congregations."—*Mike Nelson, "Promise Keepers Promises Spiritual Renewal for Men," The Tidings, March 31, 1995, p. 3.*

In that same article, Van Liefde was quoted as saying:

"There is no attempt at proselytizing or drawing men away from their faith to another church."—*Ibid.*

Van Liefde comments on how successfully this helps bring more money into Catholic Church coffers.

"One of the primary promises of the program is to return to one's local church and become a force for good in the local community. Another is the commitment in financial support of one's local church. The men are challenged to give generously of their time, treasure and talent to their local church."—*Ibid.*

One faithful Catholic layman, who attended the Promise Keepers' conference in Anaheim in 1994, was quoted as saying that it produced a strong sense of unity among all the denominations in attendance.

"At this weekend, something happened there of great importance—54,000 men, gathered to lift up their voices in a spirit of unity and began to glorify God."—*Ibid.*

Following these conferences, Catholic laymen are being encouraged to sponsor regional Promise Keepers' meetings in Catholic churches. Men from a variety of denominations are urged by their own Point Men and Ambassadors to attend them. The get-together spirit is overwhelming normal cautions.

New Covenant is the name of a leading Roman Catholic charismatic magazine. These people believe in both Catholicism and tongues! Yet, in its April 1995 issue (in the article, "*Bands of Brothers*"), Bob Harvey says Promise Keepers is the great hope of Christians everywhere for bringing men back into the churches.

A basic charter document of Promise Keepers is the "*Seven Promises of Promise Keepers*." There is nothing about obeying the Ten Commandments there; but, instead, each man is required to take an oath accepting this list of rules.

Here is *Promise #6*:

“A Promise Keeper is committed to reaching beyond any racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the power of biblical unity.”

Thus, ecumenism and tolerance toward, and acceptance of, all other religious organizations is an integral part of belonging to Promise Keepers.

FOUNDED BY FORMER CATHOLICS

It is an intriguing fact that the top leaders of Promise Keepers are former Roman Catholics. This includes Bill McCartney (founder) and Randy Phillips (president). Some have wondered whether Promise Keepers is a fifth column organization, intended to bring the churches back to Rome. Whether or not that is true, Rome seems to be very pleased with the progress of the organization.

MORMONISM WELCOMED

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is beginning to accept Promise Keepers as an organization to which they can send their men.

“The movement’s ‘Seven Promises’ are like something straight out of the men’s priesthood manual for the church,” states Mormon attorney Chip Rawlings, who indicated that several Mormon leaders would be attending the Los Angeles Promise Keepers’ conference.”—*John Dart, “Promise Keepers, a Message to L.A. Men,” Los Angeles Times, May 6, 1995, p. B4.*

How can the leaders of Promise Keepers give the right hand of fellowship to people who believe that Jesus is (1) Satan’s brother, (2) the offspring of literal intercourse by God with Mary, and (3) a man who, like His Father, happened to attain godhood.

HOMOSEXUALS WELCOMED

Please understand, gays are not welcomed in order to convert them to Christianity and take them out of their sins. They are welcomed to the conferences as brothers; no questions asked, other than whether they accept Jesus. Yet it is well-known that hardened gays believe God approves of their conduct. Those who attend the conferences are told to go back to their gay churches and obey *their* pastors!

A leading book promoted by Promise Keepers is *The Masculine Journey*, by Robert Hicks. After mentioning that Catholic priests are all truly converted, he makes this com-

ment about gays, Communists, New Agers, etc.:

“Oh, don’t get me wrong. I haven’t become Catholic, or a Marxist, or gay. I don’t condone Marxist politics or homosexual behavior. But I have learned that the way to look at God or the world is not necessarily through the lens or categories I currently believe are the correct ones. The labels don’t matter all that much, whether they be Communist, Democrat, New Age, feminist, fundamentalist, or hookers-married-to-crossdressing co-dependents.

“I think I now see the world and people differently because I try to look beyond the labels to the person, his unique situation, station, and needs. I fail often and get hooked back into my old responses, but now I consciously recognize that pattern for what it is. I believe this is the way Jesus related to people.”—*Robert Hicks, The Masculine Journey: Understanding the Six Stages of Manhood, NavPress, pp. 133-134.*

It is astonishing that such anti-Christian sentiments could be recommended and sold by Promise Keepers. Hicks relegates the teachings of the Bible to merely “the lens or categories I currently believe are the correct ones.” Then he goes on to say that those views have since changed to far more liberal ones, which condone sin of all kinds.

In another book, Hicks recommends a New Age statement to the men as a motto to live by:

“The longest journey
Is the journey inwards
Of him who has chosen his

Destiny.”—*Dag Hammarskjold, U.N. Secretary General, quoted in Robert Hicks, Masculine Journey, p. 13.*

PASTORS, THE ONLY TEACHERS

“We cannot rightly divide the Word of truth. We need you to teach us.”—*1993 Portland Conference.*

In front of the assembled thousands of men, this is what the pastors are told as they come up front for dedication to the principles of Promise Keepers.

The men are told not to try to figure out the meaning of the Bible; they are to trust and obey their pastors.

MALE BONDING

A related concept is that of “male bond-

ing." Every promise keeper must have another man to emotionally attach to, or he cannot succeed in his spiritual life.

ACCOUNTABILITY TO MEN

A basic assumption of Promise Keepers is that only human beings can help us live better lives.

Promise Keepers calls this "*Covenantalism*." Men must have emotional attachments to men in order to successfully meet the challenges of life.

Every man must be accountable to some other man for his thoughts and actions. Sounds like the Roman Catholic confessional! More on this just below.

Here is Promise #2 of the *Seven Promises of Promise Keepers*:

"A Promise Keeper is committed to pursuing vital relationships with a few other men, understanding that he needs brothers to help him keep his promises."

MENTORING

This is the idea that a man cannot remain a Christian unless he has placed himself under the direction and rule of another man. Every man must have an older "mentor" which he must submit to as his spiritual guide.

This concept is essentially the same as the Jesuit concept of "*Spiritual Formation*," which the present author wrote about recently. The concept, spreading from Catholicism into Protestantism, teaches that every Christian needs another Christian he can regularly visit, confess to, and receive spiritual directions from.

In Promise Keepers literature, "mentoring" is also called "discipling" and "shepherding."

According to this teaching, every man must be accountable to his mentor for his finances, his sexual life, and his relationship with God.

Can you see an oddity here? Wives send their husbands to Promise Keepers' conferences, so they will return home more attached to them. Yet Promise Keepers teaches the men, instead, to form emotionally dependent attachments to other men!

"In the context of covenant relationships, a man willingly grants other men the right to inquire about his relationship to God, his commitment to his family, his sexuality, and his financial dealings. Together they form a team that

is committed to advance God's kingdom."—*Promise Keepers Workbook: Seize the Moment*.

Perhaps the wife thought her husband would better handle money when he returned home or that he would be more cooperative with her more sensible monthly budgeting. But no, instead he is taught to turn over his family budget to some other man she hardly knows!

VOYEURISTIC GROUPS

This is not a topic to be discussed publicly, but the Promise Keepers men's study groups in the local churches are doing it all the time. So their wives ought to know what is going on.

Perhaps the warning will help some others avoid Promise Keepers before they get caught in something like this.

Promise Keepers wants each man to tell his past sins to a group of other men while no one reproves or corrects anything that is said. Also, no one is to say, "We've gone far enough with this thing; let's change the subject!" This is voyeurism: Everyone is enjoying the retelling of sexual tales, yet nothing worthwhile results. Indeed, in such a setting, nothing good can result.

We can understand that there might be times when a person needs to pray with a Christian friend. But why would he want to unfold his past life to a bunch of men? Is this some kind of cheap thrill?

Here is what it says in the Promise Keepers' manual:

"The first job of men's small groups is to learn complete acceptance: no judgment, no 'I told you so' or 'you should have known better.' No hidden agendas! I'm not out to change you and you're not out to change me."—*Geoff Gorsuch with Dan Schaffer, Calling Men into Vital Relationships, p. 10.*

What are some of the things that men, obedient to Promise Keepers, are told to talk about?

In order to get the sordid conversations started, the Promise Keepers men's groups are instructed to play a game, called "*People Bingo*." Each square on the bingo board contains a certain trait or type of experience. The conversation goes around the circle, and each man is asked to tell something about this trait

in their own lives.

To draw them out, questions such as these may be asked: "Have you been arrested at least once?" "Are you wearing boxer shorts or bikini briefs?" "Did a recent quarrel with your wife hurt you emotionally?" "Were you abused or neglected by your father?" "Did you have a circumcision, vasectomy, or prostate operation?"

Of what value are such questions to a person in becoming a dedicated, pure, follower of Christ Jesus? There is nothing Biblical about such meetings! They are an offense to God and detrimental to the souls of men who take part. Frankly, they are not Christian gatherings! A morbid desire to think about the sex organs seems to prevail. What a pattern of thinking to fall into! This is not a Christian meeting!

In other recommended books, the "*phallic male*" is discussed as the ideal male Christian. In the "phallic male" chapter of one such book (a Promise Keepers' group study guide), the group leader is told how to get the men to open up and tell their deepest sexual experiences, including their sexual fantasies:

"Note to the leader: If the men in your group are likely to have difficulty talking vulnerably and emphatically with each other about their sex lives, then stop and talk about why you are having that difficulty."—*Robert Hicks and Dietrich Gruen, Study Guide to the Masculine Journey, p. 32.*

In other words, if some of the men attending a night's meeting are still Christians when they arrive, the group leader must try to break down their resolves, so they will also start revealing in sex stories.

On the next page of the study guide, under the title, "*Exploring the Issues with Other Men*," several checkoff questions are listed, to get the men talking about many things which they should not discuss in public.

"Our culture has presented many initiation rites, or passages to manhood, that are associated with the phallus. Which ones have you experienced?"

"Do you have a story to share with other men about one such event?"—*Op. cit., p. 33.*

Then eight "*experiences*" are mentioned, for the men to savor as they are discussed among themselves. The ears of their wives

would burn, if they knew what Promise Keepers had led their husbands into:

"1 - When I was potty trained and stopped wetting the bed.

"2 - Pubic hair and growth.

"3 - An unfortunate experience with pornography.

"4 - My first dating experience.

"5 - My first really embarrassing moment with a girl.

"6 - The wedding night.

"7 - Conceiving my first child.

"8 - Other."—*Ibid.*

I guarantee that if any Christian woman would read the above lines, she would make sure her husband did not become involved with Promise Keepers!

How many wives would want their husbands talking about such things to the other men who attend their local church—or to any men anywhere?

THE PHALLIC MAN

In another recommended book about the "phallic male," *Masculine Journey*, Hicks says that men must be "*phallic men*" in order to properly serve Christ! This is incredible! Men must be preoccupied with their private parts in order to be good Christians. What trash!

Yet Promise Keepers has repeatedly defended this book by Hicks and refuses to stop recommending and selling it, encouraging group leaders to use it, and requiring Point Men and Ambassadors to promote its reading.

Hicks says Jesus was a phallic man, and that He battled with temptations to adultery and homosexuality (*Masculine Journey, p. 181*).

This peculiar book is the basis for one of the Promise Keepers' study guidebooks for groups! Men in Promise Keepers are supposed to carefully read through that book together!

RESTORING MEN THE WARRIOR CLASS

This ridiculous idea is part of the Promise Keepers' diet that is fed to those who attend its meetings. The men are told that "*male bonding*" is needed to restore them to the warrior class.

In the Charismatic Catholic article, quoted

earlier, Bob Harvey said that Promise Keepers was helping to successfully restore men's identities as members of the warrior class.

Somehow, this is supposed to make men better Christians. But it sounds like something designed to appeal to their vanity.

PSYCHOLOGY

The writings of Promise Keepers is heavily into psychological concepts and practices. Emphasis is placed on coming to Jesus for comfort—not forgiveness of sin. Obedience to the Bible is downplayed; obedience to fellow human beings is urged. Psychological counseling is recommended.

Here is an example of this thinking, which teaches that it is after we “feel better about ourselves as men” that we are ready to accept and love God:

“We men who struggle with guilt, pride, or apathy are prodigal sons. The father is God. We need to experience the same kind of fatherly love and forgiveness in order to feel better about ourselves as men. When we do, we'll want to commit ourselves to love God and to share His love with others.”—*William Gaultiere, What Makes a Man?* in *Twelve Promises that Will Change Your Life*, p. 31. [Like several other recommended books, different authors wrote the chapters.]

PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING

Promise Keepers encourages its men to go for psychological counseling:

“Do you have problems that are ruining your relationships? I strongly urge you to consider taking counseling . . . If you had a painful childhood and it controls your life each and every day, get help!”—*Don Osgood, in Twelve Promises that Will Change Your Life*, p. 97.

Promise Keepers' books, which consist of a variety of psychological concepts, include those by Robert Hicks, Gary Smalley, John Trent, James Dobson, Bob Beltz, and others.

INNER CHILD

According to current psychological theory, everyone has a “*little child*” within himself. By regressive therapy and similar devices, we must return and find him. Hicks says we must also talk to him regularly!

But, in trying to make contact with this so-called “*inner child*,” you might be communicating with a demon.

The search for the “inner child” forms the basis for both Freudian and Ericksonian psychology and hypnosis. Here is a passage from one of the Promise Keepers' recommended books:

“The concept of the inner child is not new, but it has become increasingly popular. From Freud to Erickson, Horney and Sullivan, all have talked much about the child within. The child within is the real or true self who has never had the freedom to develop properly. It is the part of us that is ultimately alive, energetic, creative, and fulfilled but that has been put down by parents, institutions, education, religion, politics, the media, or significant early-childhood trauma. The theoretical aspects of the concept are sound

“Some therapeutic techniques that have been found to be helpful are those John Bradshaw has popularized. In order to ‘heal the shame that binds,’ he encourages the victim to heal the memories by reestablishing contact with the child within, even talking to it.”—*Robert Hicks, Failure to Scream*, pp. 155-156.

What foolishness! This imagined “little child within” is said to be weak and frail from being “put down,” yet at the same time it is supposed to be the only energetic, creative, part of the person. Yet this myth is used as the reason for making contact with spirits.

It is positively dangerous to read Promise Keepers' books.

SELF-LOVE

We earlier noted a statement by Gaultiere, in which he said that we could not accept and love God, until we first “feel better about ourselves as men.”

Smalley and Trent, writing in the Promise Keepers' book, *What Makes a Man?* said this:

“The degree of self-control you have in your life is in direct proportion to the degree of acceptance you have for yourself. Put another way, if you don't value yourself, you won't ‘pull in the reins’ on actions and attitudes that will affect you for the worse.”—*Gary Smalley and John Trent, in What Makes a Man?* pp. 44-45.

CONTACTING THE SPIRITS

We earlier mentioned the quoted recommendation that each man should regularly talk to his “inner child.”

Hicks also says frankly that we must talk to inner spirits as well—before we can have

healing from our problems.

According to this Promise Keepers' recommended book, you need to talk to the spirits if you ever want to improve your way of life.

"I am convinced more than ever that when we talk about healing, we are talking about something that is very mysterious, if not mystical. It is the human spirit that has been wounded in trauma. To facilitate healing in the deepest parts of the unconscious as well as the conscious, we must make contact with this spirit. It takes a spirit to make contact with a spirit."—Robert Hicks, *Failure to Scream*, p. 166.

It is not contacting inner spirits that is needed in order to get rid of sin; it is coming to Christ in forgiveness, and, in His strength, obeying the Word of God.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS' METHODS

The methods used by *Alcoholics Anonymous* to solve problems—do not even acknowledge that the God of Christians even exists, much less naming the name of Christ or calling on Him for forgiveness and help.

The AA simply uses group friendship and belief in some kind of "higher power."

In the Promise Keepers' book, *Daily Disciplines for the Christian Man*, Bob Beltz says that promise-keeping men should use AA methods to solve their problems.

On page 9 of that book, he explains that a man cannot conquer his problem until he calls it a "disease." But sin is not a disease; it is disobedience to the Ten Commandments.

THE PROMISE KEEPERS' CONFSSIONAL

Hicks explains that it is telling our problems to other people that enables us to get rid of them. This is worldly psychology in the extreme. Frankly, it is equivalent to the Roman Catholic confessional. Hicks agrees:

"The recovery movement, beginning with Alcoholics Anonymous, has created a climate that is needed for healing to take place. Support groups have been successful because they create a climate in which any emotion or statement can be aired without critical evaluation. What is created is an atmosphere of gracious acceptance. What the Catholic Church . . . has known for centuries is now being used by almost all therapists in their support groups. Healing takes place when we hear others reveal their hurts, sins, and struggles and when we reveal our own in a con-

text of acceptance and affirmation."—Robert Hicks, *Failure to Scream*, pp. 25-26.

In the above statement, Hicks says that it is when we accept our faults that we have conquered them. He says that then we have healing.

But there is no mention of eliminating the problem or no longer indulging in it. He does not even call it "sin."

PERMISSIVENESS OF SIN

In one of the chapters of the book, *Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper*, Gary Smalley writes about a 19-year-old boy who returns on vacation from college, with an earring in one ear. His mother is horrified, but he tells her he could not get on the swim team without piercing his ear and putting one on. Recognizing the symbol as the homosexual badge inviting contacts, she fears what the father may say when he arrives home from work.

But, as Smalley continues on with his little story, the father enters and is not upset in the least. He says the boy can do as he pleases, and that he, the father, when he was younger did not always do right; so that makes it okay for his son to err.

Smalley concludes by praising the father for his toleration, and he says that all fathers reading this book should do the same thing when they find their children are doing wrong (pp. 105-106).

Promise Keepers calls this "sensitivity training," not sensitivity to discern sin and put it away, but sensitivity to make light of it, in order to soothe feelings. "Conflict resolution" is considered more important than defending moral principles. This is to be done, not be adhering to Scripture, but by "sensitive intuitiveness," "listening skills," and being alert to "unconscious signs" and "dysfunctional problems," in order to enhance "meaningful relationships." The men are to be "nonconfrontive," and they are told that Jesus was nonconfrontive also.

Everything is reduced to modern psychology. Sin is no longer sinful; it is just a "rite of passage" to more sins which should also be tolerated.

"Instead of jumping all over teenagers when they have their first experience with the police, alcohol, sex, or drugs, we could look on this as

a teachable moment and a rite of passage. Perhaps the true elders could come forward and confess their own adolescent sins, and congratulate the next generation for being human. Then they could move on to the all-important issues of forgiveness and restoration, but on common ground with the young person, as a fellow sinner!"—*Robert Hicks with Dietrich Gruen, Study Guide to the Masculine Journey, p. 32.*

When you go to Promise Keepers, you may be expecting one thing, but the end result may not turn out as well as you had hoped. You would do better to go to God, open the Bible, and pray as though your heart would break—till you find forgiveness, acceptance, and peace

with Him.

Share this paper with others. They need to read it also.

Promise Keepers was started as a good idea. But it foundered on a concern by the leaders to have fellowship with men of every type of belief and a willingness to send them back home to be taught by any type of modernistic teaching.

We need to be on guard, as we enter the final end of time. Every device will be used to confuse the people of God—and keep them from fulfilling their mission.

“God calls for a spiritual revival and a spiritual reformation. Unless this takes place, those who are lukewarm will continue to grow more abhorrent to the Lord, until He will refuse to acknowledge them as His children.

“A revival and a reformation must take place, under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from spiritual death. Reformation signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend.”

— *1 Selected Messages, 128*

Appendix 2: Modern Revivals

James Ryle describes for us the modern revival: Just profess Jesus and be saved.

“The Lord said, ‘Say this to the church: Stand in the light lift up your voice and sing in the streets. Sing the simple message of the gospel—‘In the name of Jesus Christ the Lord, be saved!’ Lift up your voice as a witness to Christ, and the Spirit of God will cause people to be converted.”—James Ryle, “Sons of Thunder,” *The Morning Star Prophetic Newsletter*, Vol. 1, No. 4, Winter 1991.

But there is more to coming to Christ and remaining with Christ than what Ryle imagines.

We have received warnings about revivals in these last days. Here is Inspired Counsel for our time in history.

The following excerpt is taken from *Great Controversy*, chapter 27 (Modern Revivals), pp. 460-466:

“Wherever the word of God has been faithfully preached, results have followed that attested its divine origin. The Spirit of God accompanied the message of His servants, and the word was with power. Sinners felt their consciences quickened. The ‘light which lighteth every man that commeth into the world’ illumined the secret chambers of their souls, and the hidden things of darkness were made manifest. Deep conviction took hold upon their minds and hearts. They were convinced of sin and of righteousness and of the judgment to come. They had a sense of the righteousness of Jehovah and felt the terror of appearing, in their guilt and uncleanness, before the Searcher of hearts. In anguish they cry out: ‘Who shall deliver me from the body

of this death?’ As the cross of Calvary, with its infinite sacrifice for the sins of men, was revealed, they saw that nothing but the merits of Christ could suffice to atone for their transgressions; this alone could reconcile man to God. With faith and humility they accepted the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. Through the blood of Jesus they had ‘remission of sins that are past.’

“These souls brought forth fruit meet for repentance. They believed and were baptized, and rose to walk in newness of life—new creatures in Christ Jesus; not to fashion themselves according to the former lusts, but by the faith of the Son of God to follow in His steps, to reflect His character, and to purify themselves even as He is pure. The things they once hated they now loved, and the things they once loved they hated. The proud and self-assertive became meek and lowly of heart. The vain and supercilious became serious and unobtrusive. The profane reverent, the drunken sober, and the profligate pure. The vain fashions of the world were laid aside. Christians sought not the ‘outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but . . . the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.’ 1 Peter 3:3-4.

“Revivals brought deep heart searching and humility. They were characterized by solemn, earnest appeals to the sinner, by yearning compassion for the purchase of the blood of Christ. Men and women prayed and wrestled with God for the salvation of souls. The fruits of such revivals were seen in the

souls who shrank not at self-denial and sacrifice, but rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer reproach and trial for the sake of Christ. Men beheld a transformation in the lives of those who had professed the name of Jesus. The community was benefited by their influence. They gathered with Christ, and sowed to the Spirit, to reap life everlasting.

"It could be said of them: 'Ye sorrowed over repentance.' 'For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, . . . yea, what indignation, yea, . . . what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.' 2 Corinthians 7:9-11.

"This is the result of the work of the Spirit of God. There is no evidence of genuine repentance unless it works reformaton. If he restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, confessed his sins, and love God and his fellow man, the sinner may be sure that he has found peace with God. Such were the effects that in former years followed seasons of religious awakening. Judged by their fruits, they were known to be blessed of God in the salvation of men and the uplifting of humanity.

"But many of the revivals of modern times have presented a marked contrast to those manifestations of divine grace which in earlier days followed the labors of God's servants. It is true that a widespread interest is kindled, many profess conversion, and there are large accessions to the churches; nevertheless the results are not such as to warrant the belief that there has been a corresponding increase of real spiritual life. The light which flames up for a time soon dies out, leaving darkness more dense than before.

"Popular revivals are too often carried by appeals to the imagination, by exciting the emotions, by gratifying the love for what is new and startling. Converts thus gained have little desire to listen to Bible truth, little interest in the testimony of prophets and apostles. Unless a religious service has something of a sensational character, it has no attractions for them. A message which appeals to unimpas-

sioned reason awakens no response. The plain warnings of God's Word, relating directly to their eternal interests, are unheeded.

"With every truly converted soul the relation to God and to eternal things will be the great topic of life. But where, in the popular churches of today, is the spirit of consecration to God? The converts do not renounce their pride and love of the world. They are no more willing to deny self, to take up the cross, and follow the meek and lowly Jesus, than before their conversion. Religion has become the sport of infidels and skeptics because so many who bear its name are ignorant of its principles. The power of godliness has well-nigh departed from many of the churches. Picnics, church theatricals, church fairs, fine houses, personal display, have banished thoughts of God. Lands and goods and worldly occupations engross the mind, and things of eternal interest receive hardly a passing notice.

"Notwithstanding the widespread declension of faith and piety, there are true followers of Christ in these churches. Before the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of God such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children. At that time many will separate themselves from those churches in which the love of this world has supplanted love for God and His Word. Many, both of ministers and people, will gladly accept those great truths which God has caused to be proclaimed at this time to prepare a people for the Lord's second coming. The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work; and before the time for such a movement shall come, he will endeavor to prevent it by introducing a counterfeit. In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power he will make it appear that God's special blessing is poured out; there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest. Multitudes will exult that God is working marvelously for them, when the work is that of another spirit. Under a religious guise, Satan will seek to extend his influence over the Christian world.

"In many of the revivals which have oc-

curred during the last half century, the same influences have been at work, to a greater or less degree, that will be manifest in the more extensive movements of the future. There is an emotional excitement, a mingling of the true with the false, that is well adapted to mislead. Yet none need be deceived. In the light of God's Word it is not difficult to determine the nature of these movements. Whenever men neglect the testimony of the Bible, turning away from those plain, soul-testing truths which require self-denial and renunciation of the world, there we may be sure that God's blessing is not bestowed. And by the rule which Christ Himself has given, 'Ye shall know them by their fruits' (Matthew 7:16), it is evident that these movements are not the work of the Spirit of God.

"In the truths of His Word, God has given to men a revelation of Himself; and to all who accept them they are a shield against the deceptions of Satan. It is a neglect of these truths that has opened the door to the evils which are now becoming so widespread in the religious world. The nature and the importance of the law of God have been, to a great extent, lost sight of. A wrong conception of the character, the perpetuity, and the obligation of the divine law has led to errors in relation to conversion and sanctification, and has resulted in lowering the standard of piety in the church. Here is to be found the secret of the lack of the Spirit and power of God in the revivals of our time.

"There are, in the various denominations, men eminent for their piety, by whom this fact is

acknowledged and deplored. Professor Edwards A. Park, in setting forth the current religious perils, ably says: One source of danger is the neglect of the pulpit to enforce the divine law. In former days the pulpit was an echo of the voice of conscience . . . Our most illustrious preachers gave a wonderful majesty to their discourses by following the example of the Master, and giving prominence to the law, its precepts, and its threatenings. They repeated the two great maxims, that the law is a transcript of the divine perfections, and that a man who does not love the law does not love the gospel; for the law, as well as the gospel, is a mirror reflecting the true character of God. This peril leads to another, that of underrating the evil of sin, the extent of it, the demerit of it. In proportion to the rightfulness of the commandment is the wrongfulness of disobeying it . . .

"Affiliated to the dangers already named—is the danger of underestimating the justice of God. The tendency of the modern pulpit is to strain out the divine justice from the divine Benevolence, to sink benevolence into a sentiment rather than exalt it into a principle. The new theological prism puts asunder what God has joined together. Is the divine law a good or an evil? It is a good. Then justice is good; for it is a disposition to execute the law. From the habit of underrating the divine law and justice, the extent and sinfulness of human disobedience, men easily slide into the habit of underestimating the grace which has provided an atonement for sin. Thus the gospel loses its value and importance in the minds of men, and soon they are ready, practically, to cast aside the Bible itself.

"When the way is prepared for the Spirit of God, the blessing will come. Satan can no more hinder a shower of blessing from descending upon God's people than he can close the windows of heaven that rain cannot come upon the earth. Wicked men and devils cannot hinder the work of God, or shut out His presence from the assemblies of His people, if they will, with subdued, contrite hearts, confess and put away their sins, and in faith claim His promises."

— 1 Selected Messages, 124

Solving the Promise Keepers' Puzzle

How should we relate to Promise Keepers?

Should we attend its meetings?

If not, why not?

For several years, people have puzzled over
Promise Keepers.

But now, several years after its inception
we are learning where it came from,
why it is here, and where it is headed.

Above all, we are learning its objective.

**The Promise
Keepers' Objective**