

The Truth about - Promise Keepers

PART ONE OF TWO

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 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 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 reproved, no type of perversion is to be rejected as unchristian. This theme runs through much of what you will read below.

OBEY 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 priest 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 evangelization 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 begin 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 comment 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 sentiment 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

Continued on the next tract

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The Truth about - Promise Keepers

PART TWO OF TWO

Continued from the preceding tract in this series 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 bonding.” 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 could 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 meeting 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 empathically 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 reveling 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, selling it, encouraging group leaders to use it, and 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 group guidebooks! Men in Promise Keepers are supposed to carefully read through that book together!

RESTORING MEN TO 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 CONFESSIONAL

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 context 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 fault that we have conquered it. 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 by 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 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.

—Vance Ferrell

“What do we see just ahead? Another general council! A world’s convention! Evangelical alliance, and universal creed!”—Charles Beecher, quoted in *Great Controversy*, 445.