

Historical Highlights of Promise Keepers

*“Way back before Promise Keepers had a name, we looked up the word **integrity** in Webster’s Dictionary. He gave six definitions: ‘utter sincerity, honesty, candor, not artificial, not shallow, no empty promises.’”*

Bill McCartney, founder

- March 20, 1990** **The Birth of an Idea:** Bill McCartney, then football coach for the University of Colorado (CU), and Dave Wardell, Ph.D. traveled to a Fellowship of Christian Athletes banquet in Pueblo, Colorado. During that conversation the ideas of large men’s conferences and promoting discipleship were spawned. **Randy Phillips** was named Executive Director in December.
- 1991** **“Where are the Men?”** The first Promise Keepers conference drew 4,200 men to the CU Events Center in Boulder.
- 1992** **“What Makes a Man?”** 22,000 men from every state in the nation convened at Folsom Field at the University of Colorado-Boulder.
- 1993** **“Face to Face”** Fifty thousand men from every state in the nation and 16 foreign countries came to Boulder. In addition, over 3,000 pastors and lay leaders gathered for the second National Leadership Conference.
- 1994** **“Seize The Moment”** Promise Keepers expanded to seven stadiums around the U.S. attracting more than 278,000 men. The book, *Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper*, outlined the message of Promise Keepers: seven commitments to God, friends, purity, family, church, community, and world that frame a life of Christian integrity. **New Man Magazine** was launched with Strang Publishing.
- 1995** **“Raise The Standard”** 738,000 men attended 13 conferences. Independent Promise Keepers organizations were founded in **New Zealand, Australia, and Canada**. Promise Keepers’ manifesto was published in Spanish (*Siete Promesas*). The 1995 two-CD set *Raise the Standard*, co-produced with Maranatha! Music, earned a Dove award.
- 1996** **“Fan Into Flame”** In February, Promise Keepers hosted more than 39,000 Christian clergy for a worship and teaching conference in Atlanta. **“Break Down the Walls”** The attendance at 22 stadium conferences was 1.1 million men nationwide. **“Promise Keepers Radio Highlights,”** a 90-second feature, began airing nationwide. Founder **Bill McCartney** was named Promise Keepers’ second president and CEO.
- 1997** **“The Making of a Godly Man”** Nineteen (19) conferences drew 639,000 men. In 1997, Promise Keepers and Moody Press published a workbook, ***Break Down the Walls: Experiencing Biblical Reconciliation and Unity in the Body of Christ***, by Raleigh Washington and Glen Kehrein, and Claude V. King. A one-hour television special aired nationwide during Easter week entitled, **“The Power of a Promise Kept.”**
- Stand in the Gap** On October 4, 1997, Promise Keepers hosted **“Stand in the Gap: A Sacred Assembly of Men”** on the National Mall in Washington D.C. The event gathered a reported one million men from every race, nationality, and most Christian denominations as well as from many countries around the world. The six-hour program included kneeling in prayer, worship, confession, and repentance. The event was carried live by C-SPAN. Photos and stories ran on front pages from Hong Kong’s *South China Morning Post* to the *New York Times* to the *Washington Post* and virtually every major newspaper in the nation.

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- 1998** A severe cash crunch in the first quarter forced the ministry to furlough its entire staff for six weeks in March and April. That same spring a dramatic outpouring of contributions and volunteer effort restored the ministry to financial health.
- “**Live a Legacy: Make a Difference in Your Lifetime**” More than 450,000 men attended 19 stadium and arena conferences around the United States free of charge. More than 17,000 men responded to the invitation to Christian faith. More than 32,000 priests, pastors and ministers attended **nine regional clergy conferences**.
- 1999** “**Choose This Day**” 306,700 men attended Promise Keepers 15 free conferences. Promise Keepers hosted its first international events in **San Juan, Puerto Rico, Pretoria, South Africa, and Monterrey, Mexico**, drawing in excess of 20,000 men.
- 2000** “**Go the Distance**” Training for 195,000 men included side-by-side training for fathers and sons at 16 conferences.
- 2001** “**Turn the Tide – Living Out An Extreme Faith**” Eighteen conferences were held in Promise Keepers 11th season of men’s events. Attendance was more than 194,000.
- Passage 2001, 2002** 14,000 teens, dads, and youth pastors took part in Promise Keepers’ first-ever youth conference “**The Passage**,” filling Nationwide Arena in Columbus, Ohio. Music by Cross Movement, Jars of Clay, and Michael W. Smith. Some 250 youth and adults in churches around the Midwest participated in a 12-week mentoring program. In 2002, more than 9,500 youth and mentors attended Passage in Anaheim.
- 2002** “**Storm the Gates**” In 2002, Promise Keepers’ 12th year of conference ministry, 16 cities hosted men’s conferences, reaching nearly 177,000.
- 2003** “**Come Near to Me**” Nine thousand clergy gathered at Bank One Ballpark in Phoenix, Ariz. for Promise Keepers’ second major national clergy conference. “**The Challenge – A Call to Action**” 18 U.S. conferences drew 171,000 men. “**Redeem the Time**” For the first time, Promise Keepers produced a half-day conference inside a prison, Marion Correctional Facility, a medium-security institution in Ohio. The event was voluntary and privately-funded. More than 1,000 inmates attended, and 10,000 others viewed the event via Internet or satellite links to 70 other institutions in the U.S. and Canada. **Thomas S. Fortson, Ph.D.** was named Promise Keepers’ third president and CEO.
- 2004** “**Uprising – the Revolution of a Man’s Soul**” 18 conferences were produced in PK’s 14th season, drawing more than 179,000 men and boys. Nearly 1000 men signed up for the revived “**Ambassador**” program. Almost **47,000 pounds of food** were collected for local ministries in nine conference cities. **Inmates** at two West Virginia prisons enjoyed the Charleston, W.V. men’s conference, and **active military personnel in Afghanistan and Iraq** watched conferences from Charleston and Orlando via the Internet. “**Haiti at the Cross**,” a December collaboration with New Directions International, drew thousands of Haitians for four days of prayer and praise.
- 2005** “**The Awakening – An Unpredictable Adventure**” In PK’s 15th year, more than 176,000 men were reached in 20 U.S. conferences. At the invitation of the Prime Minister, Promise Keepers also produced a meeting in Nassau, The Bahamas.
- 2006** “**Unleashed – Releasing the Raw Power of Your Heart**” More than 132,000 men were reached at conferences in 18 U.S. cities. Community impact in PK’s 16th year of conferences included more than **170,000 pounds of non-perishable food** for local faith-based charities, **213 units of blood** in four cities (with the American Red Cross), and producing a two-hour conference for inmates at the **Sanders Estes Unit prison facility** in Venus, Texas (with the Christian Men’s Alliance). Resources included a **six-week Bible study *Band of Brothers***, co-produced with Man in the Mirror, and a **music CD** with Integrity Music. More than 3000 copies of ***All About Jesus***, co published by the International Bible Society, were distributed free.
- 2007** “**Flood – Energizing Men of Integrity**” Conferences were held in **seven cities**. A pilot project was developed for ministers, “**ClergyLink**,” where more than 100 clergymen convened

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gathered for training regarding sexual and moral purity for men in full-time Christian service. Conference related resources included *Risking It All – the Adventure, Challenge and Significance of a Promise Keeper* by Todd Burkhalter (Xulon Press), PK's **19th music CD**, downloadable Bible studies, and an **online devotional tool, called "VerseMinder."**

2008

"Manhood '08 – Let the Truth Be Told" In its 19th year of ministry, church-based men's conferences hosted nearly **25,000 men in seven cities**. **Clergy training workshops** ("Grow Your Men – Grow Your Church") in each conference city were attended by nearly 1,200 ministers. A national Saturday church/community outreach event called **"PKAdventure"** was distributed in the spring and fall through theater and church satellite networks, along with related **service projects in 13 communities** from coast to coast included building a youth camp, a barn-raising, park clean up, community barbecues and block parties, house painting and building renovation, food drives, blood drives, and clothing drives.

Resources developed for men included president/CEO Tom Fortson's second book *Manhood – Let the Truth Be Told* (Moody Publishers), an Internet portal "PK Edge," a webcast to churches, military and correctional institutions, radio feature "Family Night Guy" on 1,200 stations nationwide, and PK's 20th CD project "Manhood."

In September, Promise Keepers founder **Coach Bill McCartney** was elected Chairman of the Board. Dr. Raleigh Washington was named Promise Keepers' fourth president.