

Promise Keepers Expands Focus in 2009



Promise Keepers is broadening the focus of its stadium event this year to reach out to women, the poor and Jewish believers.

For the first time in the history of the 19-year-old men's ministry, women will be invited to a Promise Keepers meeting. The event, named A Time to Honor, will take place on July 31 and Aug. 1 at Folsom Field in Boulder, Colo. It will be the only Promise Keepers event this year.

"Boulder is going to be the epicenter of an extraordinary move of God," said Bill McCartney, the co-founder of Promise Keepers who recently returned as CEO. "It's going to go around the world. This is the very heart of God, to bring the church together for the difficult days ahead."

The ministry has historically hosted multiple events during the summer that focus solely on men's issues. But the organization has struggled with declining attendance since its peak in the 1990s.

McCartney, 68, brought this new vision with him when he returned as chairman and CEO last September, five years after resigning to care for his ill wife. He said God has led Promise Keepers to restore divisions in the body of Christ, and because of their efforts he believes the Holy Spirit will show up in a powerful way.

"It's not about changing Promise Keepers," McCartney said. "We're just calling men to rally around the righteous as the days get more difficult."

Limited resources necessitated the shift from a multi-city tour to a lone event. Last year Promise Keepers scheduled eight events, but canceled one and shifted several others to smaller venues due to low

ticket sales.

“Our staff and our resources are really limited,” said McCartney, who was the head football coach at the University of Colorado when he founded the ministry. “We felt like we wanted to have all hands on deck for the Boulder event, and we feel like it will relaunch the ministry.”

McCartney, who founded a ministry for Jewish believers called Road to Jerusalem, believes the display of unity between gentile and Jewish believers will be particularly powerful.

In a letter sent in late April, he detailed this vision through an analysis of John 17:20-22, where Jesus prays for unity among believers. McCartney writes that, “In effect, Jesus is saying that when [Jews and gentiles] ... heal the divide and become one, the world will then experience its final harvest of souls.”

In September McCartney is releasing a book about Jewish reconciliation titled *Two Minute Warning*. Co-authored by Aaron Fruh, the book will be available at A Time to Honor. “The book chronicles 1,900 years of how Satan has done everything possible to divide Jewish and gentile believers,” said Fruh, a Jewish believer and pastor. “This event is basically seeking to heal this divide.”

Confirmed speakers for the event include Tony Evans, Gary Smalley, Tommy Barnett and Jane Hansen Hoyt, president of Aglow International, who will deliver the keynote. McCartney and Raleigh Washington, former Promise Keepers CEO and current president, will also speak.