

Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

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“Promise Keepers”: A Critique by Bill Davidson

That which has commanded a lot of attention in all the media is the new movement PROMISE KEEPERS. This past weekend they held a convention in the Thunderdome in St. Petersburg and it was a sell out much in advance. Tickets sold for \$55.00 each. There was a rather informative article in *The St. Petersburg Times* on Friday detailing the financial windfall of this organization. It runs into the millions of dollars. I have no doubt some men may be moved to be better husbands and fathers as a result of their attendance and participation. But it is another matter for one that is a Christian. He should already be a good husband and father as the result of being a Christian. If being a Christian has not accomplished that, it is not the fault of Christianity, but of the individual. In fact, for a Christian to participate in this movement seriously is to admit that his Christianity is faulty.

There was also a recent two page spread in the *Christian Chronicle* concerning this movement and their write-up

appears to me to be very favorable toward this effort. It is not surprising that this liberal newspaper should take such a stand.

Information has also reached me that one area congregation paid the admission price for any male member who wished to attend this meeting. I was appalled when I heard this report and it came from a very reliable source. It is beyond me that any Eldership should agree for the church to pay the admission price and in essence affirm that Christianity is failing and that something else is needed to help these brethren be what they ought to be anyway. Again, it is not the fault of Christianity that men are failing in their responsibilities as husbands and fathers.

As one reads the seven promises of a “Promise Keeper” you will readily see that the dedicated practice of Christianity already does what these are supposed to do and there is one or two that plainly contradict true Christianity.

1. “A Promise Keeper is committed to honoring Jesus

Christ through worship, prayer, and obedience to His word, in the power of the Holy Spirit.” The Christian already does this. But, is there an implication of a direct power or influence from the Holy Spirit here? Is so, then that aspect of it is in error. The Spirit operates only through the Word.

2. “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.” The practice of the Christian life amply takes care of this. The scriptures teach this principle in that we are our brother’s keeper.

3. “A Promise Keeper is committed to practicing spiritual, moral, ethical, and sexual purity.” A Christian already does this.

4. “A Promise Keeper is committed to building strong marriages and families through love, protection, and biblical values.” Again, a Christian man is already dedicated to this very thing.

5. “A Promise Keeper is committed to supporting the mission of the church by honoring

and praying for his pastor and by actively giving his time and resources." When such speak of "the church" you can rest assured they are not speaking of the New Testament church, but denominationalism in general. There is in this the idea of denominational union and that is something in which the Christian cannot participate. More on this in the next promise.

6. "A Promise Keeper is committed to reaching beyond any racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the power of biblical unity." This is advocating the joining with all denominational churches in union and not recognizing the difference between them and the New Testament church. Question: What are those Elders of the afore mentioned church going to do and/or say when the denominational churches in their area seek a wider fellowship with them? Brethren, you cannot "demonstrate the power of biblical unity" with someone with whom you are not in fellowship!

7. "A Promise Keeper is committed to influencing his world, being obedient to the Great Commandment (see Mark 12:30-31) and the Great Commission (see Matthew 28:19-20)." Once again, this is something the Christian is doing already.

In just a few days following the Promise Keepers convention I received church bulletins from two congregations widely separated in miles as well as in content. From one comes an article informing us that in a northern city there was an old fashioned altar call offered by the son of Billy Graham, Franklin

Graham. He said, "Jesus Christ is willing to forgive each one who will repent and ask for forgiveness." This is a common practice in the denominational world where salvation is proclaimed upon the conditions of simply believing and repenting. They completely leave out baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). That some of our very own brethren are advocating fellowship with such and "reaching beyond any racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the power of biblical unity" becomes even more serious as they join in support of this erroneous doctrine and practice.

The second church bulletin came from a congregation in north Florida and had an article extolling the greatness of the convention held in St. Petersburg. "Promise Keepers is a Christ-centered ministry dedicated to uniting men through vital relationships to become Godly influences in their world" is a statement in the article. Notice the author called this a "Christ-centered ministry." Brethren, Christ has no part in anything advocating salvation on terms not found in His New Testament or which encourages fellowship with the religious world in general. Neither does Christ have anything to do with a system which says in essence that Christianity is insufficient and that one needs something else (Promise Keepers) to enable him to be what he ought to be.

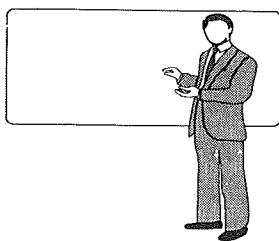
The author in the second article further said, "It truly touched my heart to see that many men in one place put aside their worries, cares and prejudices and

focus on one thing - to praise and worship Christ and Him crucified." Does it seem strange, as well as unscriptural, for a Christian to join in what he calls "praise and worship" in some system advocating the practice of error and one which implies the church and Christianity are inadequate? Some of our brethren would do well to heed the plain statement of Paul in Ephesians 5:11, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Also, Second Corinthians 6:17, "Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."

One of the brethren here at Central brought a write-up from the local paper with him last Lord's Day and asked me if I had read it. I had seen it but not read it. He is a relatively new Christian but his spiritual growth was evident as he said, "this is nothing but another church." As I read the account with the writers making mention of the practice of some of the men "going to the altar to be saved", it became rather obvious what it is fast becoming. Brethren, I predict that before long there will indeed be a church established calling itself the "Promise Keeper" name, or something similar.

According to First Timothy 3:16-17, the Bible furnishes us "unto all good works." So what is the need to participate in such? Isn't it sin to make such vows? Isn't it saying that the Word and the church for which our Lord shed His blood are not sufficient for our needs? Let the practice of Christianity make you what you

ought to be, not some movement of man!



Abbreviations In Citations

Articles in the *Harvesters*, chapters in our lectureship books as well as other professional writings often abbreviate terms or use expressions that may not be familiar to some readers. We have been asked to provide the meaning of some often used terms and abbreviations. Most of these come from *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Third Edition, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992, Computer edition.

If the term or abbreviation that you are not understanding is not in the list we have developed below check your dictionary. It is most likely there. If you do not have an updated dictionary one of the most useful items in your study of articles written in English is a good, reliable English Dictionary. We have the students to purchase *Webster's New World Dictionary*.

Brother J.H. Blackman will be teaching a class in school this fall that will have as its focus the use of tools that will enable one to better understand the Bible. Why not sign up for this class? It should help you in the subject at hand as well as other

significant helps that are available for the diligent student of the Bible.

The bolded form(s) is the most used term.

circa, preposition Abbr. **ca.**, **c.**, **C.**, In approximately; about: born circa 1900.

et al. abbreviation, Latin. Et alii (and others).

et cetera [Latin], Abbr. **etc.** And other unspecified things of the same class; and so forth. 1. A number of unspecified persons or things. 2. etceteras. Additional odds and ends; extras.

ff. abbreviation, following

cf. abbreviation, Latin, confer (compare)

e.g., abbreviation, Exempli gratia, for example

ed., abbreviation, Edition; editor.

i.e. abbreviation, Latin, Id est (that is).

ibid, Abbr. **ib.**, In the same place. Used in footnotes and bibliographies to refer to the book, chapter, article, or page cited just before.

idem, Abbr. **id.**, Something that has been mentioned previously; the same.

infra, Inferior to, below, or beneath, [From Latin *infrā*, below.]

MS. or **MSS** also **ms.** or **mss** abbreviation, Manuscript, MSS for manuscripts.

n.d. or **N.D.** abbreviation,

No date **N.**, Note; Grammar, Noun; Number

p., **pp.**, page; part (**pp.** Pages; parts)

par., abbreviation, 1. Paragraph. 2. Parallel. 3. Parenthesis.

Passim, Throughout or frequently; here and there. Used in textual annotation to indicate that something, such as a word or passage, occurs frequently in the work cited. [Latin, from *passus*].

q.v., abbreviation, Latin, Quod vide (which see)

sec., abbreviation: 1. Second. 2. Secondary. 3. Secretary. 4. Section. 5. Sector. 6. Latin. Secundum (according to). 7. Security.

sic, Thus; so. Used in written texts to indicate that a surprising or paradoxical word, phrase, or fact is not a mistake and is to be read as it stands. [Latin *sic*.]

Supra, 1. Above; over; on top of: suprarenal. 2. Greater than; transcending: [Latin, from *suprâ*, above, beyond.]

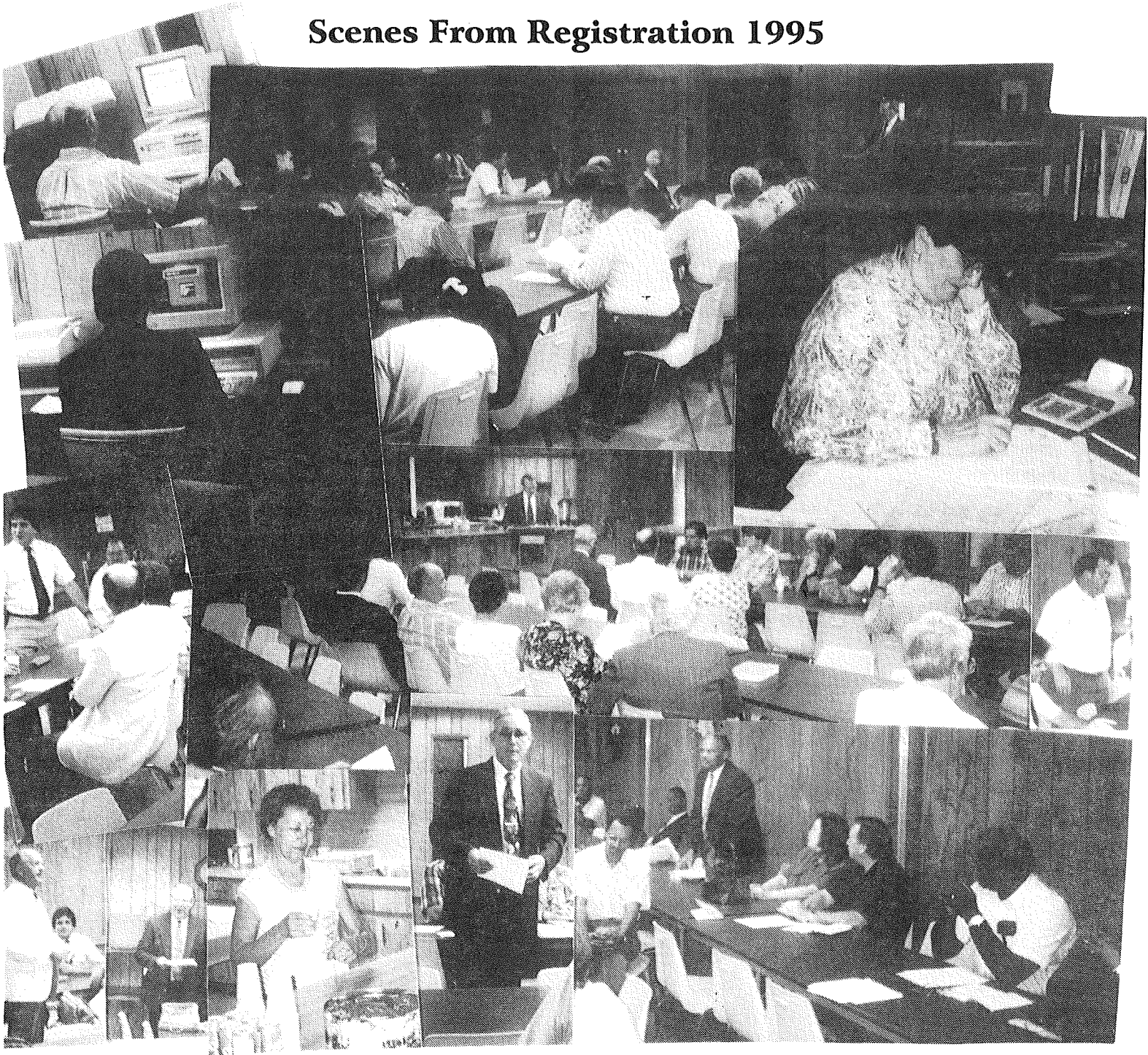
trans., abbreviation: 1. Transaction. 2. Transfer. 3. Grammar. Transitive. 4. a. Translated. b. Translation; translator. 5. Transportation. 6. Transpose; transposition. 7. Transverse.

vol., **vols.**, volume, volumes

vss. **vs.**, abbreviation, Versus.

[Editor]

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