

PARENTING

Promise Keepers pledge family values

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Mark Buonaugurio attended his first Promise Keepers conference in 1996, the year before he got married. Now, with two sons and a third child on the way, Buonaugurio finds that the conferences — he's been to seven — have helped guide him in his role as a family man.

"They keep laying the challenge down. You can't mistreat your wife and be a man of integrity, and you can't ignore your children and be a man of integrity," said Buonaugurio, 38, who attends St. Lawrence Church in Greece.

Buonaugurio was among several thousand men who attended the first Promise Keepers event ever to come to Rochester. Billed as the "Storm the Gates Conference," it took place June 14-15 at Blue Cross Arena at the War Memorial.

Speaker Larry Jackson, pastor of an evangelical church in North Carolina, emphasized commitment to family during his Saturday-afternoon presentation. He stressed the husband's vital role in spreading Jesus' word in the household, saying that even when this message isn't followed by children, "That doesn't mean I've got to give up." Jackson also implored participants to not "let a day go by that you don't call out to God in the name of your wife and children."

Family responsibility is among the seven promises of a Promise Keeper. The others are honoring Christ and God's word through the power of the Holy Spirit; pursuing vital friendships with other men; practicing spiritual, moral, ethical and sexual purity; supporting one's church; reaching beyond racial and denominational barriers; and making a commitment to influencing the world around oneself.

The promises were noted throughout the weekend by emphatic speakers, with powerful Christian musical performers adding to the sense of spirituality. This combination incited conference-goers to frequently wave their hands or lay them on fellow participants, with eyes closed and fervent prayer coming from their lips.

"It was wonderful to be part of the 10,000 people singing praises to the Lord," said Rich Cringoli, 56, who serves as business manager at St. Theodore's Parish in Gates. He attended the conference along with Father Daniel Holland, pastor, and Richard McLean, a fellow parishioner.

McLean, 53, said "it was amazing to see fathers with their sons, grandfathers with their grandsons." One such person was Chuck Johnson, 22, from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Hamlin, who attended Promise Keepers with his father, Chuck Sr., and his grandfather, Robert Gavens. Gavens also served as a volunteer.

Johnson said he was enlightened by the



Lee Russell of Winthrop, N.Y., holds his hands up in prayer during a musical presentation at the Promise Keepers conference June 15.

Promise Keepers' message about family, saying, "I'm going to go home and teach myself to be a better Christian. And once I learn, I'm going to pass it on to the family."

Johnson also noted that he bought a Promise Keepers T-shirt for his 6-month-old son, Silas. "If (Promise Keepers is) around long enough when Silas is older, I'm definitely going to bring him with me," he said.

McLean said he was pleased that many of the conference's messages meshed with his efforts to raise his two children, who are now grown. And Cringoli, whose children are ages 20 and 15, said he was struck by Jackson's point that a true family leader also must be a servant.

"Without you doing that kind of stuff — being there, helping — leadership is hard to do. It has to be your example," Cringoli said.

Promise Keepers is an international men's movement begun in 1990 by Bill McCartney, former head football coach at the University of Colorado. The Rochester conference, which was part of a 16-city tour, drew men from all over New York and surrounding states.

Although the Promise Keepers speakers' guide listed men with mostly evangelical backgrounds and no Catholics, the conferences are open to men from all denominations. In fact, Buonaugurio attends an ecumenical discussion group comprising people he met at a previous



Seventeen-year-old Lee Lundrigan (left) of Verona, N.Y., and 16-year-old Chad Hall of Oneida, N.Y., pray during the conference.

Promise Keepers conference.

Even so, Buonaugurio acknowledged that leadership of Catholic parishes had mixed reactions when he sought to put up promotional flyers for the conference. Promise Keepers also draws criticism from such groups as the National Organization for Women, which claims the organization overly portrays men as leaders and women in submissive roles.

McLean and Cringoli — who were attending their first Promise Keepers event — said they likewise questioned some elements of Promise Keepers. Still, they felt the overall impact was good.

"Any time you get 10,000 men singing praises, that seems to be authentic," Cringoli said.

Meanwhile, Buonaugurio said Promise Keepers allows him to follow Jesus' edict to love God with all your heart and soul. "It's unlike anything I see in a lot of (Catholic) churches. I almost never see this kind of passion," he said.

Buonaugurio added that Catholics should feel comfortable at Promise Keepers events, saying he's never been a target for proselytizing. "Promise Keepers keeps the focus on Jesus," he said. "It's not about dividing the body of Christ, but coming together for all the things we have in common."

"I got the clear sense that it was non-denominational, if you will, but it was Christian," Cringoli added. "I'm sure Catholics sometimes forget we were Christians first."

Family Events

● JUNE 21, 28 — Walking tour: of downtown Rochester; tour significant local and natural history sites; meet at City Hall, 30 Church St., Rochester; noon-12:50 p.m. or 4:45-6 p.m.; \$5; call Mariana at 585/271-7368.

● JUNE 26-30 — Musical: "Godspell"; Bristol Valley Theater, 151 S. Main St., Naples; Thurs. & Sun. 2 p.m.; Thurs.-Sat. 8 p.m.; \$21 adults, \$19 seniors, \$11 college students, \$8 children; 585/374-6318.

● SUN, JUNE 30 — Transportation exhibit; and train ride; New York Museum of Transportation, Industry Depot, Rte. 251, Rush; rides depart every 30 minutes starting at 11:30 a.m.; last trip 4 p.m.; \$5 adults, \$4 seniors 65+, \$3 students ages 5-15, under 5 free; open every Sunday during summer; 585/533-1113; www.nymtmuseum.org.

● MON, JULY 1 — Exhibit opening: "Making Radio Waves"; compare radio now and then as you conduct radio interviews, create sound effects, listen to famous moments in radio; Strong Museum, One Manhattan Sq., Rochester; Mon.-Thurs. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Fri. 10 a.m.-8 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun. noon-5 p.m.; \$6 adults, \$5 seniors/children; 585/263-2702.

● SAT, JULY 6 — Celebration: "New York State's Emancipation Day"; 175th anniversary; music, street theater, food, crafts & historic games; Washington Square Park, Court St. at S. Clinton Ave., Rochester; noon-3 p.m.; parade for freedom 1:45 p.m.; 585/546-7029; www.landmarksociety.org.

● FRI, JULY 12 — Family fun: Catholic Family Day at Six Flags Darien Lake; park pass \$15, park & picnic pass \$22; contact your parish or order tickets by mail by July 5; send check to Diocese of Rochester, Jeannie Raisbeck, 1150 Buffalo Rd., Rochester, NY 14624; 585/328-3210, ext. 279.

● JULY 13, 14 — Air show: "History of Flight"; Genesee Airport, Rt. 63, Genesee; noon-4 p.m.; free admission, \$5 parking per vehicle; www.1941hag.org; 585/243-2100.

● THRU DEC. 2002 — Exhibit: ExploraZone 2; fabulous science interactives; opened June 13; Rochester Museum & Science Center, 657 East Ave., Rochester; Mon.-Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun. noon-5 p.m.; \$7 adults, \$6 seniors/college students, \$5 children ages 3-18, under 3 free; 585/271-1880.

● ONGOING — Exhibit: "Geo-Zoooom! and Riding Train"; fun activity stations invite children to learn about geography and transportation; Strong Museum, One Manhattan Sq., Rochester; Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun. noon-5 p.m.; \$6 adults, \$5 students, seniors, children ages 2-17, under 2 free; 585/263-2700.

Wegmans  DVD now available at select stores

HOME VIDEO Your home for family entertainment!

try the convenience of...

5* DAY RENTALS on every movie or game in the store, including new releases!

*3 Day rentals on Popular Hit and Catalog only at Coming store




Will your child be ready for the challenges of a full day Kindergarten this fall?
BATES-RICH BEGINNINGS CHILD CARE

OFFERS FULL DAY KINDERGARTEN
(Also ideal for younger 5 year olds)

*Registered NYS Dept. of Education
*Certified teachers *NAEYC Accredited Center

Call 244-3650 for details or enrollment information!
Accredited Center, Registered NYS Dept. of Education.

