

Me Loves Me Brudder, But Me Brudder Doesn't Loves Me Back

In 2009, Promise Keepers tried to re-vitalize its ministry. Promise Keepers had for several years seen a steady, and somewhat alarming, decline in attendance at its conferences. In 2009, Promise Keepers scheduled a conference at the University of Colorado, in Boulder, where the Promise Keepers movement had originated many years before. The scheduled speakers and presenters at this 2009 conference included several Messianic Jewish men, who were, and are, each very accomplished in their respective ministries. Those respected men were Jonathan Bernis, Paul Wilbur, Dr. Daniel Juster, Joel Chernoff, David Chernoff, and Marty Goetz.

Rick Erb had been an active participant in Promise Keepers conferences from 1995 through 2003, having attended one conference every summer during that period, and also attending the 1997 event in Washington, D.C. Rick was very blessed by his participation in Promise Keepers over those years, but by 2003 he had concluded that his path in life was taking him in a different direction. He had by then begun his participation in the restoration of the Whole House of Israel, and 2003 was the end of his continuous attendance at the Promise Keepers conferences.

However, in 2009, Rick was contacted by one of his friends with whom he had regularly attended Promise Keepers conferences for so many years, advising that a core group with whom they had attended many of those earlier conferences were once again chartering a bus to go to the 2009 conference. This friend urged Rick to go, and Rick agreed to go because his good friend had asked him to. Following that conversation, Rick decided to see who the speakers would be at the conference, and was astonished (and pleased) to see this Messianic Jewish lineup of well-known and highly respected leaders.

It occurred to Rick that maybe this was not just a coincidence, and that maybe the Father had a plan in him being invited to this particular conference, after his several year hiatus from participation in Promise Keepers. As a result of that impression, Rick wrote an “open letter” entitled “Me Loves Me Brudder, But Me Brudder Doesn't Loves Me Back” which he sent, along with a personal cover letter to Coach McCartney and Dr. Raleigh Washington, who head up the leadership team of Promise Keepers. He also sent the open letter and a personal

cover letter to each of the Messianic Jewish leaders who were scheduled to participate in the conference. Those letters were mailed out to those eight gentlemen on July 1, 2009, well ahead of the conference.

Rick did not receive any response from anyone to those letters, but he really didn't expect to. He went to the conference, and what he heard and experienced was in some ways very disappointing. He was hoping that Promise Keepers would be presenting a message about how the God of Israel was calling His people back to a more pure understanding of how we are called to relate to Him. Instead, the message was unmistakably that Jews are supposed to obey the Father's instructions, given through Moses, and that so-called "gentiles" are supposed to instead obey the traditions of men, which have been handed down through many centuries of what we have known as the church.

Following the conference, Rick ordered a complete set of the teaching CDs so that he could listen carefully to what was said, and make sure that he had not misconstrued anything. Even though the CDs were being made and sold at the conference, within minutes after the speakers had finished their presentation, it took several months, and several follow-up communications from Rick to Promise Keepers before Promise Keepers finally shipped him the CDs which he had requested shortly after the conference.

After listening carefully to what had actually been presented at the conference, Rick set about the process of writing follow-up letters to Coach McCartney and Dr. Washington, and to each of the Messianic leaders who had spoken or presented in music at the conference. Those letters were sent out on October 15, 2009. This time, Rick *did* expect to receive some sort of response. Instead, there was only silence. He allowed several months to pass, but still there was no response.

On April 29, 2010, after reading a series of inaccurate and antagonistic articles written by Dr. Juster, Rick wrote again to Dr. Juster in an attempt to promote some sort of dialog. That letter also went unanswered. On June 22, 2010, having still heard nothing from anyone, Rick wrote again to Coach McCartney and Dr. Washington, and copied that letter to each of the Messianic leaders with whom he had been attempting to communicate. Again there was silence.

Not long after that, there was a fire at the Promise Keepers headquarters in Colorado, and the fire apparently caused significant damage. As a result of the fire, Rick was concerned that maybe the letters he had earlier sent to Promise Keepers had been destroyed, so on August 4, 2010, he sent an entire packet of the earlier communications to both Coach McCartney and Dr. Washington. In keeping with their earlier conduct, they continued to maintain their silence.

On September 2, 2010, still having heard nothing, Rick wrote another letter to Coach McCartney and Dr. Washington, mentioning that he had already written to them on four previous occasions and had not heard a thing in response. With that letter, Rick also enclosed a proposed “check the box” form of reply letter, which could easily be completed in under a minute. It is also worth noting that along with every letter he sent, Rick had sent along postage prepaid envelopes so that a response could easily, and without cost to anyone (other than Rick himself), mail back a response, *any response*. Once again, there was only silence.

On October 15, 2010, having written to Promise Keepers on five separate occasions and not once having received a single syllable in response, Rick sent out a gentle reminder to everyone (the “*Ahem*” letter) that he really was expecting some sort of response. Again, there was no response. That was the last letter Rick sent to Promise Keepers, having concluded that it was useless, and probably bad form, to continue pushing for some form of communication when it was crystal clear that he was alone in that desire.

Along the way, there was some minor communication from three of the Messianic leaders. Because of the complexity and treachery of the inner workings of some in the Messianic Jewish movement, and because of a desire not to complicate things for people who might be willing to communicate were it not for that complexity and treachery, nothing will be disclosed about “who said what.” However, it is completely accurate to say that there was never any communication of any sort from Coach McCartney, or Dr. Washington, or anyone else on behalf of Promise Keepers, nor was there any communication of any sort from Dr. Juster, Joel Chernoff or David Chernoff. The letters which follow are scans of the originals which were personally mailed out by Rick, beginning with the open letter and the cover letters.