

STAND IN THE GAP

Christian Men Rally to Reignite Their Spirit

Washington Post

Mall Event Marks 10th Anniversary of Landmark Promise Keepers Gathering

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Sunday, October 7, 2007; Page C05

Ten years after hundreds of thousands of men went to the [Mall](#) for an epic revival organized by the evangelical group Promise Keepers, a smaller group gathered yesterday for the same purpose: to light a spiritual fire in Christian sons, husbands and fathers.



From midmorning to late afternoon, a few thousand men gathered in the shadow of the [Washington Monument](#) for an anniversary revival called Stand in the Gap.

They sat in lawn chairs in the heat as preachers boomed from a stage. They rose to their feet to sing, arms outstretched to God in unison, and they bowed their faces to the ground in prayer.

"Our Heavenly Father was the first to have a dream," motivational speaker Rick Rigsby told the crowd after citing [Martin Luther King Jr.](#) "I'm not talking about a man . . . a star or a stud . . . an actor, athlete or auditor . . . not [Nietzsche](#) or Freud. . . I'm not even talking about

Buddha or the [Dalai Lama](#) or even Muhammad; I'm talking about [Jesus Christ](#)!" Attendees jumped to their feet. "I'm not talking about Eastern mysticism or pop psychiatry."

In 1997, the dynamic evangelical men's movement Promise Keepers held multiple mega-events across the country meant to inspire men to assume responsibility and leadership. Its event on the Mall that year attracted at least 600,000 people and remains one of the country's largest religious rallies. But in the years since, Promise Keepers' national profile has waned because of declining revenue and reorganization.

But some said yesterday that the event inspired a decade of new attention to men-specific ministries. Stand in the Gap 2007 was organized by a national coalition of men's ministries and is named after a Biblical verse from Ezekiel.

In the crowd was Fred Schwein, 50, of [Annandale](#), who brought his 7-year-old son and a friend from church. Both men were at the 1997 event and said the focus felt the same.

"This is to encourage men to hold their families together, to be faithful to their wives and their children. To be spiritual leaders in their families. Not to be rudderless," he said.

Tom Corcoran, 54, of [Manassas](#) surveyed the scene from outside the prayer tent, where men inside were praying for the crowd. He said that as wonderful as it was to see the turnout, much more important is what people do when they leave.

"This isn't summer camp. It's about remembering the awesome God we serve. It's about inspiring each other," he said. "I don't want to sound like Hillary [[Rodham Clinton](#)], with that book of hers about it takes a village. But there's a nugget of truth to that."
