



GETTING REAL: Fervent worship at Promise Keeper's Forging Tomorrow's Men event in Manukau recently.

Forging ahead

at PKs event

NEARLY 2400 men flocked to the recent Promise Keepers men's event in Auckland, bringing the total attendance at all the events around the country this year to 5160.

Many of those who attended the fifth and final "Forging Tomorrow's Men" at the TeisraClear Stadium in Manukau on October 9 and 10 made first-time commitments, rededicated their lives, or made promises to God.

Speakers included Paul de Jong, senior pastor of LIFE Central, Auckland; Iliafi Esera, senior pastor at Faith City Church, in Wanganui; Pastor Taveale Matai from Auckland Word of Life Church; Martin Steel, who pastors Harbourside Church in Auckland and Peter Whaaga, an evangelist whose life was transformed by God in prison.

"The speakers focused on the need for the Holy Spirit to cleanse, renew, restore and refresh hearts," said Paul Subritzky, New Zealand director of Promise Keepers.

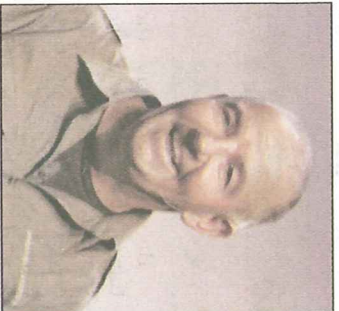
The messages throughout the event focused on the process of being forged into God's ultimate man, not merely by behavioural change, but through the transformation of the heart. The men Challenge Weekly approached during breaks times all agreed that they found the messages helpful, challenging, and inspirational. "God was definitely in the house," said an excited Raymond. "Awesome preaching."

The Rev Charlie Hughes, vicar of St. Michael's Anglican Church in Henderson, was thrilled by the creativity of the event. The forging theme was visually evident right from the start, from the scaffolding at the entrance through to the antique power hammer and mega-heavy traction engine wheel stage props.

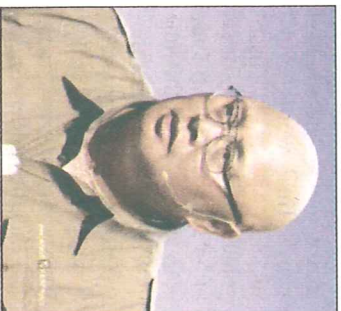
"I was also impressed with the range of speakers, from the energetic and fiery to the quiet and thoughtful," said Mr Hughes. "The range of

ages, cultures and denominations was good. There was a great atmosphere of worship, and responsive readings, and the silent prayer and full volume enthusiastic praise were all fantastic.

"And the moving challenges to conversion, devotional discipline, sexual purity, committed fatherhood, creative husbanding, energetic local church involvement, mutual accountability groups and active social concern — where else do I take guys for them to experience such a wide vision of discipleship?" asked Mr Hughes.



Paul de Jong



Peter Whaaga

Tendai summed it up when he said, "The fact that the event has been dealing with the issues of the heart and moulding and shaping me into the man who God wants me to be, has been amazing."

On Friday night, a large number of men went forward to make first-time commitments or rededications to Jesus in response to a message of salvation.

The following afternoon, married men in the main auditorium heard Mr Steel and Mr Matai's speak on

marriage and family, and heard a panel discussion on sex. Many men commented on how much they appreciated the way the topic was tackled in an open, honest way which went straight to the heart of the issue.

Afternoon breakouts were also well-received: Single Focus for single men over 30, Stance for 18 to 30 year olds and Transition for young men from 11 to 17. Sam Harvey, Dave Crocker and Nick Tuitasi fronted a dynamic programme. So many young men responded to make commitments that there were not enough forms.

Nick one of the young men who responded said Transition was an "awesome experience".

"I really got a lot from the speakers. They didn't dodge issues ... and this made it a really worthwhile event. I made a recommitment to Christ and look forward to my renewed walk with God and the future."

The highlight of the weekend, said Mr Subritzky, was on Saturday night as vast numbers of men came forward to be prayed for individually and presented with a dog tag — a symbol of their determination to keep their promise and commitment to guard their heart and protect the changes that had occurred in them over the weekend.

A number of Promise Keepers' new field representatives were in attendance during the weekend and many men took the opportunity to go and talk with them about men's ministry in their own church and enquire about ongoing coaching for ministry with men.

As part of an outward mission focus, the men who attended the Auckland Event dug deep and gave generously in support of World Vision's Tanna Island project and the Samoa Tsunami Appeal. Promise Keepers has been closely connected with the Samoan community for many years. ■