

# BROTHER'S KEEPER

THE COMINGS AND GOINGS OF THE PACIFIC  
NORTHWEST

FEBRUARY, 2020  
VOLUME 8, NUMBER 1



## Stand Fast in the Faith

by Brother Brian Herren

### Regional Events 2020

- Women's Retreat: April 24-26
- Men's Retreat: May 15-17
- Summer Preaching Series: June 12-14
- Reunion: Aug. 3-9
- Youth Camp: Aug. 9-14
- Priesthood Retreat: Sept. 18-20
- Fall Conference: Oct. 2-4

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- Regional Theme for 2020
- Summer Preaching Series
- Elder Jay Havener
- Santa Clarita
- Women's Retreat
- Men's Retreat

In his letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul encouraged the Saints at Corinth to be watchful, and to stand fast in the faith (I Corinthians 16:13). Not just *any* faith, but *the* faith. The divine faith whereby Christ had singlehandedly united His flock, and the burning, living faith which inspired the Apostles to spread the church throughout the world. To the Thessalonians, Paul wrote: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (II Thessalonians 2:15). Brother Paul warned the branches of imminent threats to the church, both external and internal, which would arise through incremental perversion and alteration of the original doctrines revealed in truth: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them". The grievous wolves proved to be various external threats, but equally damaging were those within the church who began to sow doubt where men had once sown assurance. Some in Galatia also fell victim to subtlety and doubt. Paul wrote to them with strong language: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another Gospel; Which is not another, but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ" (Galatians 1:6-7). The Apostle Paul called the church to be vigilant: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto, let him be accursed."

In time, the erosive powers of darkness took root, and the subtle perversions proved strong, giving rise to the apostasy foreseen by the Apostle John while he was in exile: "And the woman (the Church) fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore years" (Revelation 12:5). The true Church had fled, and one thousand, two-hundred, and sixty years would pass before her return.

However desperate the times, and deep the apostasy, a restoration had been promised. Brother John saw a day when the fullness of the gospel would be returned to the earth: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people... (Revelation 14:6). Christ himself foretold of the days when the fullness of the gospel would be preached again upon the earth: "And *again*, this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come, or the destruction of the wicked" (Matthew 24:32). As evidence that this prophecy had been fulfilled, and that this gospel had been committed again into the hands of men in the latter days, the Lord spoke in 1831: "And now verily saith the Lord, That these things might be known among you, O inhabitants of the earth, I have sent forth mine angel, flying through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel, who hath appeared unto some, and hath committed it unto man... and this gospel shall be preached unto every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, and the servants of God shall go forth..." (Doctrine and Covenants 108:7a-7b).

The everlasting gospel has been committed again into the hands of men, the Church restored after more than a thousand years in the wilderness, and the priesthood authority entrusted again to those ordained of God. Now is the day wherein we must stand fast in the faith, knowing that the same forces which subtly eroded the footing of the Church in the days of the apostles will surely seek to sow the seeds of doubt amongst the latter day church as well. The scriptural admonitions and warnings of Paul now find new relevance as we wade the mire of slothfulness, and resist the path of apathy.

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## Stand Fast in the Faith

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While external forces and internal weaknesses may challenge the heart of the church today, we have the assurance that those who will endure in their faith, and hold steadfastly to the Word of God, shall not be deceived. While many may stumble, and some may fall, there will be Saints clad with the whole armor of God whose hearts remain firm and whose vision remains true. They will be pure and dedicated. Let us be numbered amongst those people. If we have fallen apathetic, let us take our place in the pew again. If we have fallen silent, let us lift our prayers once more. If we have doubted, let us give place for faith. If we have complained, let us give way to virtue. The hour is unto the strong, and the Lord is the strength of His people. Let us put away sin and her shifting loads so that we might put our shoulder to the yoke once more and see the light undimmed in the face of another generation. Let us not be deceived, or dissuaded. Let us not be found wanting or longing, turning or fainting. The way forward is a straight course. Set the mark, steady the hands, and stand fast in the faith. This is the year of the Lord.

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*...to them who are sanctified of the Father; and preserved in Jesus Christ...it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints... (Jude 1:1-3)*

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## Summer Preaching Series 2020

by Brother Brian Herren

*The Saints are encouraged to travel and attend each service:*

Friday preaching service in <u>Vancouver</u> :	6:45 pm
Saturday preaching service in <u>Vancouver</u> :	6:45 pm
Sunday services at <u>Willamette Mission State Park</u> :	9:45 am

Dear Saints, please mark your calendars and plan to attend a summer preaching series to be held in the Pacific Northwest, June 12-14, 2018. Elder Jay Havener, of Michigan, will preach Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. All are invited for a potluck picnic after Sunday morning services at Willamette Mission State Park. This will mark the 7th annual Northwest Regional Summer Preaching Series. In 2014, Brother Eric Odida preached a three day series, followed by Brother Frank Shepard, Brother David Gilmore, Brother Paul Gage, Brother Richard Neill, and Brother Brian Mundy. This year, Brother Havener will preach the series and all who attend are sure to be blessed. Brother Havener is a strong leader in the

Restoration with a powerful testimony of Jesus Christ and a fundamental perspective of the precious gospel. He is a valiant witness of the Lord, with a cheerful countenance, who carries the spirit of our finest preachers. As each day of ministry and fellowship builds upon the previous, those who are able to attend the entire series will be especially glad that they made the effort. A few paragraphs of Brother Jay's testimony are provided on the following pages:

## My Testimony

by Brother Jay Havener, Michigan

Between the years of 1971 and 1975, I was looking for God. I was not looking for a church, just God. I looked in several churches because one would think if God was anywhere, He would be there. I never found Him there. I didn't know what He looked like, what He felt like, or even if He existed. I wondered if He did exist, was He mindful of me? All I knew was, that as full as my life seemed to be, I was missing something that left a big hole in me that I could not fill with "things" or intellectual pursuits.

I grew up in Northwest Missouri in Platte County. I did not grow up in a church home. My family at one time had been Methodists, but long before I came along, something had happened that caused a falling out between my family and the Methodists. I never knew really what the issues were.

One would think that growing up as close to Independence as I did, I would have heard about the RLDS Church, but I did not know anything about them and they apparently did not know anything about me either! I remember one time driving through the little town of Nashua, Missouri on our way to visit my sister who lived there, passing a church with a very long name – Reorganized Church of something or other. I remember asking my parents what church that was and they said it was probably some kind of fly-by-night "outfit." I didn't pursue it any further.

I spent a lot of time in the evenings walking for miles along the country roads in and around our small farm, not really praying, but talking to God. At least I hoped I was talking with God – He never answered me that I was aware of. Nevertheless, I kept up my end of the conversation. I talked about the big empty hole in me. I asked Him if He knew how to fill it. I asked Him if He really cared if I had a big empty hole in me. I told Him that if He existed, I would like to get to know Him and find out if He still cared about this world that I had been told He created.

Years earlier, when I was an adolescent, I attended a Bible School every summer at a little country Church simply called the Hampton-Farley Christian Church. It was a small red brick building occupying the northeast corner of an otherwise empty four-way intersection of two dirt roads. The pastor's name was Brother Day. He was a tall slender fellow that seemed to be a kindly gentleman who always seemed happy to see all of us youngsters. I suppose the real truth for me was that I was there because at some point in the day, I knew that we would go outside and play baseball. That was what I tried to plug up the hole in me with – baseball.

The first day I attended, I felt out of place because I did not have a bible. Everyone else had one, but the only one we had at our house was a large red one that my mother kept in her cedar

chest. I remember at the close of that first day of Bible School, my teacher Mrs. Booth presented me with the King James Bible inscribed with the words, "Presented to Jay Havener by the Hampton-Farley Christian Church Bible School Department, June 1967." Except for Bible School, I never cracked that book much. Each year I would bring it with me to Bible school more as a prop than anything else. It seemed that all my other friends could magically open their bibles up to the right chapter and verse, while I fumbled through the pages not knowing exactly where to find John 3:16 – After all, there were four Johns in the bible!

I remember my last year there. I was actually too old for Bible School, but Brother Day and Mrs. Booth said I could come anyway. The evening of the last day of the week was a parents program. Mom and Dad came to see the crafts I had made and to hear me and my class sing the songs we had learned. Brother Day gave a talk—I guess it was really a sermon. He told us that we had to be "saved." When he told us that, he invited all of us that wanted to be saved and to have Jesus in our hearts to come forward. All of us kids went forward and repeated a little prayer. Brother Day told us that

we were saved from Hell and that Jesus was in our hearts. I didn't feel any different and I always wondered if any of the others felt different and if they did, what was it supposed to feel like?

Several times between 1971 and 1975, I would pull that Bible they had given me down from the shelf and try to figure out who God was, where He was, and what He did. I could never make sense of the words. So, I gave up trying to figure out

God from the bible. It seemed that my Dad's advice about finding out something that I wanted to know was appropriate. He would tell me, "If you need to know something you don't know, just ask." So, I walked and talked and asked God if He was there. Some nights I would walk five or ten miles talking to God. When I ran out of words, I would listen for a voice or something that would indicate that He heard me. It seemed at those times, there was nothing out of the ordinary—just hoot owls and night birds, coyotes, and cicadas.

In the meantime, I continued to try to fill up the empty hole in me. I immersed myself in baseball, theatre productions at school, and physical conditioning. By the time I graduated in 1975, I was in peak physical condition. I was playing the best baseball I had ever played and I was planning to attend the yearly Kansas City Royals walk-on tryouts. My back up plan was to pursue a theatre degree at Southwest Missouri State University.

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## My Testimony

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Apparently, though, God had different ideas; except I did not know that it was God. I thought I was having the absolute worst luck in the world. Three weeks after graduating, in the middle of my final year of summer league baseball, I came down with rheumatic fever. I spent the next month – or most of it, in the hospital, not able to walk because the fever had settled in my leg and my knee was swollen the size of a basketball. I lost all of my physical conditioning. I was unable to walk without crutches for another month. Needless to say, I never tried out for the Royals. So, it was onto plan “B.” Unfortunately, my doctor would not clear me to attend school so far away from home. In fact, he did not want me to attend college at all for a whole year. Finally, he relented and told me that I could go on two conditions; I was not to take up any physical education courses that required physical exertion, and that the school had to be within an hour's drive of his office. That limited my choices severely. Park College was ten miles from my home. That is the one we settled on. The only redeeming quality of the school for me was that it had a reputable theatre program.

Park also had a reputation that it had developed through the sixties and early seventies as a party school and a loose academic value system. That was fine with me. However, the same time I arrived on campus, the “Mormons” showed up as well. It was a while before I knew that they were not Mormons but that they were that Reorganized Church of something or other that I had seen many years earlier on the way to my sister's house. Regardless, it seemed to me and others that things were going to become very rigid and structured in a hurry. I was not happy. But, I also did not let that deter me in my social proclivities. It did seem that there were scads of RLDS members coming in droves to the campus. In reality, there were less than a hundred students and administrators out of a total student population of 800 that were actually RLDS.

By nature, I am an observer. I tend to sit back and watch things going on around me before I act on something. I was not happy about the changes that the RLDS were making in the school social and academic structure, but I wanted to see where the chinks were in their armor. As a theatre major, I was already somewhat of a questionable character, so it was easy for me to be a thorn in the sides of the RLDS students. We had the run of the campus because often we worked late in the night at the theatre. We would pull pranks on the RLDS students and generally test the resolve of the RLDS administrators—one in particular, Harold Condit who not only was RLDS, but also the new President of the School.

Park College's (now Park University) was “Fides et Labor—Faith through labor.” It had been a Presbyterian sponsored school for most of its history. It was not until the RLDS Church took over that that motto had meaning—at least since the previous twenty years. I never saw so few students with such a presence. They seemed to be in every organization and in every class. Wherever they were, they were a presence to reckon with. When I was able to finally play sports again, our theatre department had an intramural team that played flag football and softball. I was on both teams. We loved playing the RLDS teams just because we could be antagonistic and do and say things they wouldn't. We figured they were there to stay, but so were we and we weren't going to change just because they were there.

Through my first year at college, I had forgotten my search for God. I was too busy to think about the empty hole in me. It's a funny thought, when life gets tough, things have a way of coming back on you. That hole I managed to forget for a year or so, came back and it seemed bigger than ever! School was getting tougher, the theatre program became more intense and I failed classes as I worked harder and longer for the theatre. Theatre itself was getting increasingly intense as I became the student technical director for the Actors Prologue Company. The more self-indulgent I became in my focus on getting myself to the top of the theatre food chain, the bigger the hole became and the harder it was to ignore.

I went looking for God again. I started watching the RLDS students. They didn't seem to have any holes in them. I was invited to play softball with some of the RLDS guys in the intramural program. I put them to the test. I swore every chance I got and would look for their reactions of disgust and condescension. I never saw any. I would show up to practice with my beer and drink it in front of them just to see if they would say they had enough of me. They never did. They seemed to live their religion all the time not just on Sundays. They accepted me when other Christians shunned me. I started to wonder if they knew God.

I met Lyndon, an Elder from Humansville, Missouri. He was in my Life and Death class. It was one of those classes you could take as a religion class or a sociology class. I took it for the sociology credit. I had to dig up that bible I had been given in Vacation Bible School many years earlier. That was our text book. One day after class, I was sitting in what we called the Pub, eating a hamburger and fries and studying. Lyndon walked up to my table and sat down. I didn't really know Lyndon—even by his name—I just knew he was in my sociology class. Lyndon sat down, introduced himself, and told me that he was an Elder in the RLDS church. I said something intelligent like, “Oh yeah?”

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## My Testimony

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He picked up my bible and leafed through it for a time and finally handed it to me and said, "Read this," as he pointed out Isaiah 29. I read it and shut the book when I was done. He told me that Isaiah 29 was talking about the Book of Mormon. His church believed in the Book of Mormon, and that the book had come from the dust as Isaiah had described. He told me about the Book of Mormon being translated from gold plates. I told him that if his church was built on the 29<sup>th</sup> chapter of Isaiah, it was built on a pretty thin foundation. He got up and simply said, "Our foundation is thicker than you think," and walked off.



I have never been one to turn my back on a challenge. I decided that I would have to show Lyndon just how precarious his position was. I was certain that I had never run across any civilization that had ever written on gold plates. I knew that stone tablets had been used, clay tablets, papyrus, and clothe. I was certain gold had never been used by anyone. I figured this was my first line of attack for up-ending Lyndon's claims.

A couple of weeks later, I was in the library working on a biology paper. I was in the biology section of the library stacks, looking for reference materials. I really don't know how I got from the biology section of the library to the archeology section since there was quite a distance between the two sections. I didn't even know the library had an archeology section, but all of a sudden, there I was going through the archeology stacks. I pulled a book from the section on the Museum of Mexico. As I opened the book, my eyes fell upon a picture of a case display in the museum that had text written on thin gold plates. I was at once amazed and realized at the same time, my strategy for disputing Lyndon's claim was destroyed.

I wasn't ready to give up. I figured I would find a couple of weak places in the Book of Mormon itself that I could use as an advantage. So I found a copy of the book and started to read it. I read it from cover to cover. It was easier for me to understand than the Bible. I kept wondering why God couldn't have made the Bible as easy to understand as the Book of Mormon. Every time I thought I could dispute a portion of the book, something I would read later either in the Book of Mormon or in the Bible, would end my disputation. As I continued to read the Book of Mormon, something seemed to stir within me. As I talked and argued with Lyndon, the hole that was so big to me at one time, seemed a whole lot smaller.

I started to talk to God again. Still, I wasn't entirely sure He was listening. I was invited to a couple of prayer services with the RLDS students. It seemed God heard them, judging by their testimonies. I started going to cottage meetings with a Seventy of the Church that explained more fully the beliefs and testimony of the RLDS church. It seemed God talked to him and heard his prayers too. The things he told me about the church seemed to at once solidify the things I remembered from Bible School and at the same time, make more sense to me about Jesus, His Church and His doctrine.

I met an RLDS girl and we dated for a while. It didn't work out. I met another girl. We didn't really date, but I was always there to walk her home from her late night air shift on the college radio station. She would tell you I was stalking her!

She was intelligent. She was fun. She was sassy. She was also RLDS. I told her that I didn't want to talk about religion all the time like the last RLDS girl did. She didn't. I met her in January 1978 during what the college called an interterm session where students could concentrate on a specific course of study they found appealing. She invited me to go home to Michigan with her and three other girls from there for Easter that year. I went. She introduced me to her family as her friend Jay.

I never knew until a few weeks later, that this girl had been taught from a very young age to pray for her future companion; that God would protect him and guide him in the right paths. She had talked to God for many years about her future husband.

I attended Easter Services with her and her family. They attended the Lake Orion, Michigan congregation of the RLDS Church. We sat in the back of the church—a lot of people sit in the back of the church it seems. What is it about the front of the church that people shy away from it?

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## My Testimony

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During the service, I remember thinking about Kathi and that she was good wife material. I wasn't really listening to the sermon; half-listening I suppose. The other half of my attention was thinking about how the hole in me seemed to be smaller than it had ever been. I wondered if God had somehow filled it in. The thought no sooner had crossed my mind when I heard someone say, "You have been called to join my Church and take Kathi to be your wife." I turned around, realizing at once we were in the back pew and no one was behind me! I shook my head, thinking my mind was playing tricks on me. I turned my attention back to the service. A couple of minutes later I heard the voice again, only this time it was much more detailed. The voice said, "You are called to join my Church and take Kathi as your spouse. You have been prepared these many years. I have heard your prayers and questions and have placed those in your path that would lead you to my Church." Suddenly I knew that not only did God exist, he had heard my every conversation I had had with him!

On the ride back to Missouri, I told Kathi that I had made two decisions; the first was to join the church and the second was to ask her to be my wife. She immediately answered yes to my second decision but that I would have to ask her dad's permission. We called her parents when we got back to school, so that I could ask their permission. I am sure they wondered how "friend Jay" became "fiancé Jay," but they gave their blessing.

Kathi shared with me later that God showed her who she would marry and that when she met me, she knew without a doubt, that I was the one God had shown her.

I was baptized into the church in August, 1978. We were married in January, 1979, less than a year from when we had met. I was ordained a Priest in June of 1980. In less than two years' time, I was truly a greenhorn in the most important areas of my life—my ministry and my marriage. God has continually blessed Kathi and me. We wanted children, but couldn't seem to have any. We fasted, prayed and went to the Elders of the Church for administration and Joshua was born in 1984. Jacob came to us by the same means in 1989. In 1990, God called me to the office of Elder and has blessed me abundantly in my efforts to minister on His behalf. Kathi and I celebrate 41 years of marriage this January. I have never sensed the hole I used to have in me so many years ago. It is a mere memory now, and I drink from my saucer because my cup overflows constantly. I know God's voice now and I know that when I really listen to it, blessings always follow.

## A Mission of Fellowship to Santa Clarita

by Brother Mitch Arndt

Brothers Gary, Derek and I visited with Brady and his wife Marcella at their beautiful home in sunny California. What a nice break from our gloomy rain in the northwest. Our hosts picked us up at the airport and as an ice breaker treated us to delicious In-N-Out Burger on the way to their home. That afternoon set the tone for the rest of the weekend as we shared in testimony, prayer, worship and class study for over 8 hours. This pattern continued through all of Saturday and into Sunday adding a communion service and sermon. Marcella with her tremendous cooking skills and conversation further added to this blessed visit. The Spirit was strong with each of us guiding and directing us continually. This experience was new to me and it added a "timeless" component as the weekend disappeared. Praise God in heaven!



## A Spirit Filled Weekend in Santa Clarita

by Brother Gary Jones

A visit was requested by Brother Brady Winegar, and after some planning, it was scheduled for February 7-9, 2020. Elder Gary Jones, Elder Mitch Arndt, and Priest Derek Ethridge traveled to Santa Clarita. After much prayer and fasting, we went by the leadings of the Spirit to guide us. Friday afternoon we spent time in very deep spiritual conversation, not realizing that more than eight hours had passed. Saturday morning, we were given a tour of Brady's hometown. Saturday afternoon we covered a lot of topics, with more in depth conversation into the night, with Elder Mitch Arndt covering some of the classes we received at the Priesthood Retreat in September. Sunday, we had communion service, followed by Brother Derek Ethridge playing us a hymn on the ocarina. Elder Gary Jones brought the message on time, and what our purpose is. Afterward, Elder Mitch Arndt gave the closing remarks and there was an administration. It was a Spirit filled weekend that went way too fast! Blessings to Brady and his family.

Dear Saints, please be advised that all are welcome to join the Salem Branch at their annual congregational camping trip, July 3-5, 2020 at Sunnyside Campground on Foster Reservoir near Sweet Home, Oregon. RV and tent sites are available. Please call Brother Brian at 503-949-2484 to make reservations. Saints from Salem should also call or notify Brother Brian.





# 2020 Pacific Northwest Women's Retreat

April 24-26, 2020 - Anderson Lodge

Regional Theme:  
"Stand Fast in the Faith"

## Friday, April 24

3:30 - 6:00    Arrival  
6:30            Dinner  
7:30            Evening activity

## Saturday, April 25

8:00            Breakfast  
9:00            Song Service  
9:15            Classes  
  
12:00           Lunch  
1:00            Afternoon Chats (Testimonies & Sharing)  
2:15            Free time, craft (\$7), recreation  
5:00            Dinner  
6:00            Song Service  
6:30            Prayer and Testimony Service

## Sunday, April 26

8:00            Breakfast  
9:00            Song service  
9:00 - 11:00   Communion and Preaching Service  
                  Goodbyes and Departure

### **Registration Information**

**Please send \$115 if registration is  
received before April 10th**

**-or-**

**\$125 if registration is received after April 10th  
(add \$7 for craft by Sister Maddy Clark)**

**Send to: Jim Clark**

**4577 Sunflower Way NE, Salem, Oregon, 97305**

**Checks should be made out to:**

**NW Region of Restoration Congregations or NWRRC**



# 2020 Pacific Northwest Men's Retreat

May 15-17, 2020 - Lewis River Campground

Regional Theme:  
"Stand Fast in the Faith"

Friday, May 15

6:30 Dinner  
Introduction - Brother Brian Herren  
7:30 Song Service - Brother Ron Trammell  
8:00 Evening preaching - Brother Mike Terry

Saturday, May 16

8:00 Breakfast  
8:45 - 9:15 Morning Worship: Brothers Steve Scuito and Ron Trammell  
9:20 Class: Brother Jeff Rew  
Class: Brother Gary Jones  
Afterward Lunch  
1:30 Class: Brother Kevin Herren  
Afterward Free time  
5:00 Dinner  
6:00 Evening Worship: Brothers Michael Livingston and Travis Clark  
Afterward Prayer and Testimony Service: Brothers Mitch Arndt and Derek Ethridge

Sunday, May 17

8:00 Breakfast  
9:00 - 9:30 Song Service - Brother Jim Clark  
9:30 - 10:15 Communion Service - Brother Wray Moreland  
Break  
10:20 Parting Charge - Brother Brian Herren  
Afterward Lunch to go

**Registration Information: Please send \$90 to: Jim Clark**  
**4577 Sunflower Way NE, Salem, Oregon, 97305**  
**Checks should be made out to:**  
**NW Region of Restoration Congregations or NWRRC**