

“The Search for Truth”

The Search for All Truth Online Event

Sunday Main Session

October 4, 2020

Denver Snuffer, Jr.

Greetings to Nihon, the Land of the Rising Sun.

I am grateful you have come to this conference. It is about “The Search for Truth” because we seek to find and understand all truth. The people who organized and speak at this conference are not part of an organization or church, but let each person search for truth with us. We welcome anyone who also seeks for truth.

Religion should be truth. But while all religions do have some truth, every religion has lost many truths and therefore are all incomplete. We are a small group of people on a quest for truth. We welcome all truth we can find, for truth is our religion.

Across all the world’s nations and cultures there are stories about the earliest times when gods created this world and put mankind here. Those stories tell us that in the beginning there were great truths taught to the earliest fathers by gods. But records written at the beginning do not exist, therefore our memory of the beginning is incomplete.

You live in an ancient land, but the name Nihon for your island-nation was first given your land at the same time Moses was leading a group of Israelites to freedom from Egypt. Before Moses, the Israelites had only oral traditions about the gods and the earliest times. But the gods revealed themselves to Moses and taught him about the creation of this world. Using what he was taught by the gods, Moses wrote five books called the Torah, telling about the creation of this world and the gods’ commandments for Israel. Those became the first five books of the Bible.

After Moses, generations of Israelites had men who also wrote sacred books in which they recorded that the gods continued to speak to them and reveal truths. For more than 1,000 years Israelites added more books to the five written by Moses, which together became the *Old Testament* of the Bible.

Like the Israelites, your ancestors had only oral traditions about the creation of this world handed down for generations. The Emperess assigned imperial court scholar Ono Yasumaro to write down the traditions that became the first record, *Kojiki*, Nihon’s oldest book. At nearly the same time the *Kojiki* was written, an Israelite prophet named Isaiah was adding his sacred book to the Bible.

Isaiah’s record was added as the 22nd book of the Bible. He foretold of a time in the distant future when people who love truth will be gathered together from all over the world, including some “from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts ... from the four corners of the earth.” (OC Isa. 5:5) We believe Isaiah wrote about what is happening now and we will see this gathering of people happen. We believe that Nihon is one of the islands of the sea from where some will come

to be gathered. People from Nihon will bring truths with them that we want to gather. We believe the gods want all of us to search to find truth.

After writing down the *Kojiki* or '*Records of Ancient Matters*' Ono Yasumaro assisted in recording a second record book, *Nihon Shoki*. Both the *Nihon Shoki* and the *Kojiki* are to followers of Shinto what the first five books of the Bible are to the Israelites.

All these books, the Bible, *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* tell of the earliest history of the creation of this world, at a time when gods made this world.

The Bible tells the story of the first seven generations of mankind, or the patriarchs. The first man was named Adam and in the seventh generation from Adam was his descendant named Enoch. The *Nihon Shoki* tells the story of the first seven generations of the gods. In both of these accounts of the creation, this world and the people in it all are created by, or descended from, the gods.

The records of the Israelites were important to prove that the Israelite people were specially chosen by the gods to help the world understand the truth. The records of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* were important to establish that the emperors of Nihon were descended from and chosen by the gods.

Like the genealogy used to prove the authority of the emperors, the genealogy of Jesus Christ in the Bible is used to show that Jesus Christ was chosen by the gods to be a 'second Adam.' The Bible reports that the first man, the father of all mankind, Adam disobeyed God. Because of his disobedience the gods decreed death for him and all his descendants as punishment for that disobedience. The gods sent Jesus Christ, a son of god, to repair Adam's disobedience.

The record of the life of Jesus Christ was written in four books that began a series of 27 books comprising the New Testament of the Bible. All 27 of these were written by a single generation of writers.

The Bible tells us that unlike Adam, Jesus Christ obeyed all the commandments of the gods, and therefore He did not deserve to die like all others. Adam's punishment of death was just, but Jesus Christ's death was unjust. Therefore, death could not hold Jesus Christ in the grave. He rose from the dead, and broke the power of death.

After Jesus Christ rose from the dead, He commanded that everyone everywhere be told the story in the Bible, and that they learn He rose from the dead so that all people who have ever lived will also be brought back from death and live again. It was no longer important for people to be Israelites. All people, in every land, are invited to come and learn about their salvation from death, disobedience and error by learning of Jesus Christ and following Him. Teachings of Jesus Christ are the basis for the religion of "Christianity."

Old Testament Jews are divided into dozens of different sects and disagree with one another about many things in their scriptures. Christians are divided into 34,000 different sects and disagree with one another about many things in the *New Testament*. The same

words are used to define these faiths, but believers understand the same words very differently. There have been wars fought over these disagreements in understanding.

Buddha lived and taught 200 years after the *Nihon Shoki* was written down. His teachings have also come to Nihon and both Buddhism and Shinto beliefs have become part of your belief systems.

Like Jesus Christ, Buddha taught how to live a peaceful life, with harmony between people. The Bible and Christianity teach mankind to value one another and care for each other. Buddhism also teaches mankind to pursue a path to peaceful existence in harmony with others.

At about the same time Buddha's teachings came to the people of Nihon, two families and a servant led by the gods left the people of Israel and traveled by boat to the Americas. For a thousand years they also kept sacred records of their history and contact between them and the gods. The story of those people is told in the *Book of Mormon*. Their record was carved into metal, buried in the ground, and hidden for over a millennium and a half.

Beginning in 1820 the gods started to restore the lost truths from the beginning. A young man was shown where the sacred record of the ancient Americas was buried in the ground. With the help of the gods, that record was translated into English and printed in 1830 for the first time, so we can now read it. Like the Bible, this record is also scripture.

People who believe the *Book of Mormon* to be scripture are called "Mormons." But, like the Jews and the Christians, Mormons also disagree about many things in scripture. There are over 80 different Mormon churches making competing claims to be the one that is true.

No Jewish sect has all the truth. No Christian church has all the truth. No Mormon church has all the truth. I can say that for certain because the Book of Mormon confirms that what every religion on earth has is also only part of the full truth, and the *Book of Mormon* promises that more will be given to us by the gods, so we can increase in knowledge and wisdom.

The most correct book about this creation is the *Book of Mormon*. It is the standard of truth for today. All truths from any source should be measured by the standard of truth in the *Book of Mormon*.

But the things recorded in the *Book of Mormon* were written nearly 1,500 years or more ago. One book recorded events that took place more than 4,000 years ago. We can read the record of the Book of Mormon today, but to understand a different people, different culture, different society, who wrote in a different language makes understanding the *Book of Mormon* challenging. Because one person sees and understands words from one background, and another person sees and understands the same words from a different background, the words of holy books should be able to help us agree with each other. But instead the words have been used to make disagreements, conflicts, and even violence. It is not enough to have true words in a book. We must also allow the truth to be seen.

Sometimes we see only darkly because of what is inside us. We have a story about how we see only what we want to see, and understand only what we choose to understand. That story is "*Hope and Tarwater*" and I will tell it to you:

HOPE AND TARWATER

Two towns bordered a woodland. Each of the towns had a tradition about the woods. In the one it was said: "the woods are dangerous, and many things there can hurt you. The animals include the mountain lion and wild boar, which have been known to injure many a man; and the bear, which has killed many a man."

As the course of civilization develops the woods are always subdued and tamed. The wild things are domesticated and the dangerous are killed. In time the woods become a backyard, no longer threatening to humanity.

In the other it was said: "the woods are beautiful and many things there can surprise you with their loveliness. The animals include the bluebird and chipmunk, which have been known to sing for hours; and the wild deer, which has inspired many a painter and poet."

As the course of civilization develops, the woods are always subdued and tamed. The wild beauty is domesticated, and many lovely creatures are killed. In time the woods become a backyard, no longer providing humanity with rare scenes of wild beauty.

The first town was named Tarwater for an explorer who had survived there against all odds. He came in winter, and had to find warmth, food and shelter while battling the elements. He felled trees, built a cabin, and burned trees for warmth which he cleared from around his homestead. He slew animals to eat and kept their hides for clothing.

The second was named Hope for a woman who raised her children there against all odds. She came in summer, settled in a meadow, and found everything she needed to survive in or on the land. She placed her tent beside a hot spring, which provided her warmth in the cold weather. She ate berries and wild fruit, and found pine nuts plentiful. She was able to weave the flax growing wild beside her stream and make linen clothing for herself and her children.

The children of Tarwater never entered the woods unarmed. They expected to find danger, and were prepared to meet and oppose it.

The children of Hope never entered the woods without a basket or bag. They expected to find food and flowers, and were prepared to gather them in gratitude.

Lance was a son of Tarwater. James was a son of Hope. They each

entered the woods on the same summer day.

Lance entered quietly, expecting to give any lurking danger no notice of his presence. Stealth was one of his weapons. Lance brought a bow and arrow.

James entered singing, expecting to greet the forest's beauty with the joy of his song. Music was his often companion while in the woods. James carried a scroll.

From Tarwater there were no paths into the woods. Those who entered always took their own way, fearing to leave a trail to teach predators there was a place frequented by men. Lance crept about in the shadows, watching for prey and hoping to avoid anything which might cause him harm. From Hope, however, there were paths which led to the meadows and berry patches known to bloom in the woods. James walked along a path from Hope which led into the woods, hoping to find new food to gather and share with his family.

Many bears lurked in the woods near Tarwater. Near Hope, however, the frequent human visitors along well known pathways made the bears leave, for they did not like the company of mankind.

Lance moved with care. His bow ready to set in flight his arrow. He intended to bring meat back for his village and hoped to encounter prey without a long hike. He knew every step he took away from Tarwater would be a required return step while he carried his game. He moved in cautious arcs spreading his search ever wider with each arc that penetrated into the woods. He passed the morning searching without success. Just after mid-day the sky began to cloud. To Lance this meant the shadows may be leaving and could not be used to orient him for the return hike. To mark his way, he took out his hatchet and stripped the bark on one side of a trunk to maintain his orientation using what may be the last shadows.

Now, because of the clouding sky, Lance's journey was changed from arching to a straight line. When the mark on the trunk was still faintly visible from the distance, he cut another mark on the same side of a new tree, and after stripping the bark cut two ax-marks below it to signify this was the second of his marks. When he was six marks away from where he started, he stopped and waited for such game as may cross his path.

It began to rain. Animals would settle down in the rain, and would not wander into his concealed position. It was an unfortunate development, which meant hunting this day was coming to an end. Reluctantly Lance began his walk back to Tarwater.

His return was less cautious than had been his advance. The sound of

the falling rain concealed his footsteps, so he needn't take care for his footfalls. Now he was alert for only danger, and not for hunting game.

Bears do not need sounds to help them hunt. But the intermittent sound of the chopping was what originally caught the great bear's attention. It was not familiar to him. He had closed in to site Lance from the sound. But he waited to begin his hunt of the young man until after the rain began to fall. The sound of the rain would conceal the bear's steps until he was close. Then a charge would allow him to attack Lance before the young man could repel the charge.

Over the sound of the falling rain, Lance heard a distinct "crack" from behind. He knew in an instant it was not rain, but the sound produced by some much heavier object breaking a twig or branch. For the son of Tarwater, instinct took over. He turned behind a tree while loading and drawing back his bow in a single movement. The charging bear was more than his bow could kill. But Lance was taught how to respond to danger of this kind.

He knew bears could run fast uphill, but could not run fast down. Their legs were built for uphill speed, but downhill they were awkward, even clumsy. There was a depression to the left of him, but Lance was unfamiliar with this part of the woods. He could not know if the depression was a bowl inside of which he could be trapped, or a hill, which would put distance between him and his predator. He also knew that his arrow would do the bear no harm if it struck his head, but it might be of great advantage if it were lodged in the front shoulder. It would take some luck, as well as skill, to place the arrow in a spot which could rescue him. So Lance took careful aim before letting his arrow fly.

Immediately upon releasing the arrow, Lance took flight. He could not afford the time it would take to see it hit. His aim had been just to the left, so that as Lance sprinted away toward the depression the bear's changed route would intersect the arrow.

Luck was with him, and Lance's arrow had some effect. When he glanced back over his shoulder, Lance caught the view of a bear tumbling forward. That could mean only one thing: the arrow had struck a shoulder and momentarily caused a front leg to fold. This would add time for his escape.

To his relief, the depression was a hillside. Lance flew to the bottom, then cut sharply downwind and looked for a way to retreat in secret. He needed to find a place where he might not be seen before the bear reached the hilltop. If he was seen, then concealing his scent with the wind wouldn't matter.

He found a rock outcropping that allowed him to change directions yet

again, and was certain his dart concealed him before the bear reached the hilltop. This was very hopeful.

The bear took time to bite at the pain in his shoulder. It stung him, and had momentarily cost him the use of his arm. Arrows do not dislodge by pulling at them, and so the bear could only break away the arrow. He could not dislodge the arrowhead.

Ever since God taught Nimrod the secret of making arrows mankind has benefitted from a weapon which always drives deeper after striking its target. The shape takes advantage of muscle movement, and pushes deeper and deeper into the animal once hit. The bear's arrow sank on impact into the shoulder, and his struggle to remove it dug it deeper. In his anger at the sting, the bear recovered his senses and returned to hunt his prey. This time not just for food, but also to vanquish a challenger to his territory. When, however, he reached the spot from which the young man had been lost to his sight, the young man was nowhere to be seen. He studied the area below, but could detect no hint of movement or scent. The bear moved cautiously into the valley.

Lance, however, was moving quickly beyond the valley, changing directions to conceal his retreat. It was many hours later before he rested for the first time. By then the rain had stopped, and he could listen again for the sound of any movement behind him. He was well, alive and perhaps even now safe from his dangerous pursuer. But he was lost. And it was getting dark.

Most predators fear fire. However a wounded bear pursuing an attacker would not. Lance knew if he built a fire this night he would announce his location to the bear. So he would remain wet, cold, lost and on guard throughout the night. The cloud cover remained, though the rain had stopped.

At first light Lance searched for a clearing from which he might see the horizon. When he finally discovered an opening it must have been mid-day, he thought. He studied it carefully for any sign of a threat both within the meadow and around its perimeter. He thought he saw a man carrying something moving away at the far end, but his view was distant and he could not be sure. When satisfied, he entered quickly to the center, then scanned the horizon for the highest point. He memorized the scene and left quickly and quietly in the new direction. It was half a day's hike to the highest point. On the way he found water, and killed squirrels for a meal.

It was dark when his ascent ended. He would have to await daylight to reorient himself again. Overnight the clouds finally cleared while he slept for the first time since entering the woods. In the morning, from the highest point of the horizon, Lance knew the east from the rising sun, then studied

the direction from which he began for anything familiar. Shortly after sun up he found what he was looking for: a small plume of smoke rose in the distance. This would be Tarwater. From where he was standing Lance estimated it would be a day and a half to walk back to his village. He would wait to hunt again until the second day. Until then he would only be journeying toward home.

When James entered the woods from Hope he followed the main path until its first fork, where he followed the path to the right. This he knew would lead to the great meadow deep in the woods. He intended to gather a full load of pine nuts which the sun had dried along the meadow's perimeter. His mission served two purposes: first, to gather food; second, to prevent new seedlings from encroaching on the meadow. By turning these seeds to food, the people of Hope preserved what was a valuable, large meadow in their woods.

When he had hiked half a day, clouds began to gather. James was in no hurry and determined if it started to rain he would take cover off the path. It did rain. He took a forked branch, along with a straight branch. With the straight branch he lifted a dense patch of ferns, propping the branch at one end with the forked one. This made the rain drain away from the raised center, where he sat and waited. It rained until nightfall, and so James determined to sleep on his dry spot beneath the ferns. As the last light of day lingered, he wrote his thoughts upon his scroll.

Early the next morning he set off again in the direction of the meadow. When he arrived he walked the perimeter until he found where pine-cones remained un-harvested. He took out his bag and began to remove their seeds. When emptied, he threw the pinecones back into the trees and off the meadow perimeter. The process was slow, but not monotonous. He enjoyed the work.

James was nearby the fawn for hours before he noticed it lying there. Fawns have only one defense: to lay motionless and hope to escape detection. When he noticed it, James knew by its stillness it was hiding from him. He watched it for a moment to confirm it was breathing. Then he withdrew in reverence. He walked along the perimeter until he found where the pinecones started again in the other direction. Then he resumed work.

Although he intended to leave the fawn alone, he noticed its mother did not return that day. It was late in the evening when his bag was filled, and so he thought it would do no harm to spend the night and see the fawn was taken care of by its mother.

In the morning James checked to confirm the fawn had not yet stirred, then retired to a hiding spot on the meadow perimeter. By mid-day the fawn

was moving, and stood. This was a sign to James that the fawn was now in danger, and its mother was not going to return. He walked to it, and it did not flee. He took it in his arms and returned to pick up his bag. As he left the meadow a man with a bow entered the far end.

James' return to Hope was slowed by the load he carried. But the fawn needed care and so James was grateful to repay a debt owed to the forest.

When Lance entered Tarwater many gathered to find out what had taken him so long. He told them the tale of his days of danger and flight in the woods. Tarwater was reminded again that the woods are dangerous, and many things there can hurt you. The wild still needed to be subdued, and its dangers overcome.

When James entered Hope many gathered to find out what had taken him so long. He showed them the fawn and told them the story of his walk. Hope was reminded again that the woods are beautiful, and many things there can surprise you with their loveliness.

Our ideas control our perceptions. We interpret everything through our own filter, our personal point of view. Our cultures tell us what ideas we should value, and therefore because we come from different cultures we hold different ideas.

Today the gods have spoken again to us, and we have also been given more truth from heaven. We have been told we must search to find all truth here on earth, and gather it together into one complete set of beliefs.

Your first ancestors had messages from the gods taught to the first generations by holy men sent to teach truths. The *Book of Mormon* records, "And the Lord God hath sent his holy prophets among all the children of men to declare these things to every kindred, nation, and tongue, that thereby whosoever should believe that Christ should come, the same might receive remission of their sins and rejoice with exceeding great joy," (NC Mosiah 1:15) We believe anciently your ancestors were given truth from the gods.

We come here to Nihon to tell you about how the gods have been working to return truths to the earth. But we have also come to learn truths from you. Your history, your traditions, your rituals, and even your culture have truths we seek to understand.

The people of Nihon on average live more than 5 years longer than people of the United States. There are many reasons for this, and some of them are based on truths we hope to understand and add to our own.

Truth is not always welcome. The truth can require us to change our minds, acknowledge our mistakes, and do things differently. But truth is compared to light in the scriptures. Errors are compared to darkness. We are promised that if we will welcome the light, then the light will grow. "And that which does not edify is not of God, and is darkness. That which is of God is light, and he that receives light and continues in God receives more light,

and that light grows brighter and brighter until the perfect day.” T&C 36:4.

Of all people in the world, you who live in the Land of the Rising Sun should understand how growing light is a blessing from heaven. The light of a perfect day is when you have all truth, and no darkness remains in you.

We plan to build a temple where mankind and the gods will associate with each other, like it was in the beginning. We know that the gods expect us to accomplish this, and we are now preparing to do this. When that temple is built, it will be the “ensign” Isaiah wrote about when he described today. People will come from the four corners of the earth, and from the islands of the sea, to assemble in that temple. Isaiah said those who come to that temple will learn about the gods and truths of this world. Isaiah wrote, “But in the last days, it shall come to pass that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths.” OC Isa. 1:9.

We believe the gods intend to keep every promise they made to mankind. We believe Jesus Christ will restore all of us to life. We know that Jesus Christ died, was buried, and rose from the dead. He has instructed us to be baptized in His name as an initiation to follow Him. Baptism is a ritual to symbolize death, burial and resurrection. We are put under the water, to symbolize being buried in the ground. We are brought back out of the water to symbolize rising from the grave or returning to life following death. We have authority from Jesus Christ to teach about Him and to baptize any who choose to follow Him.

Baptism begins a new life. It is sometimes called being “born again” because it represents living a new life, laying down the old life. When we begin to follow Jesus Christ, the light begins to grow. Increasing light comes as a blessing from the gods to those who follow the path of Jesus Christ.

Increasing light inside our spirits lets us understand this creation. The search for truth is the search for light. In a dark room, many things are hidden from our sight by the darkness. Eyes cannot help you in darkness. You can feel carefully, and slowly with patience and effort, you can discover chairs, and bookcases, and other things in the darkness. Yet you will not understand any colors, nor fully comprehend what is hidden in the darkness.

But in the same room, with the help of light, you can see everything. Even the colors of the objects are easily understood. There are many reasons why we do not see this creation clearly. There are many forms of darkness.

The standard of truth for today is the 1,000 year record of the people who migrated to the Americas. That record was revealed and translated in 1830. All truth from every part of the world should be measured by that record.

Having a record does not mean you understand it. Like Lance who saw only what he

expected to see in the forest, and like James who also saw only what he expected, we also read the *Book of Mormon* to see what we want to see.

You have different minds, a different culture, and different ideas in you. When you read our sacred books you see, understand, and interpret them from your vantage point. You can see what we do not. In the search for truth, we can help one another to see more of what is really there and to notice what is hidden from one point of view. The most accurate book of truth is still not fully understood.

We must all be willing to accept light when the gods offer it to us. The *Book of Mormon* tells us: “he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word. And he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God, until they know them in full. And they that will harden their hearts, to them is given the lesser portion of the word until they know nothing concerning his mysteries;” (NC Alma 9:3)

The *Book of Mormon* tells us that the gods have given every nation some part of the truth. We are looking to find and gather again truths from every nation. We are taught: “the Lord doth grant unto all nations, of their own nation and tongue, to teach his word, yea, in wisdom, all that he seeth fit that they should have;” (NC Alma 15:13) We have been told: “There will yet be records restored from all the tribes, that will be gathered again into one,” (T&C 157:47)

According to the *Book of Mormon*, your nation has been given words from the gods. They are wise words to guide your nation. Even if the original words have been lost or changed, the ideas from above remain as part of culture, tradition, and attitudes. Help us to understand your greatest wisdom, and we will share what wisdom we have with you.

Our scriptures declare: “Truth is Mormonism. God is the author of it. He is our shield. It is by him we received our birth. It was by his voice that we were called to a dispensation of his gospel in the beginning of the fullness of times. It was by him we received the *Book of Mormon*, and it is by him that we remain unto this day.” (T&C 138:24.) If you have truth, then it is part of our religion.

This is the time that was promised thousands of years ago when God “might gather together in one all things in Christ (both which are in Heaven and which are on earth), in him.” (T&C 140:4)

To keep the promises, God will lead faithful people from all over the world to be gathered into one body of believers who will be commanded to begin: “building up of the New Jerusalem, which is hereafter to be revealed, that my covenant people may be gathered in one in the day that I shall come to my temple.” (T&C 26:8)

If you want to follow Jesus Christ and receive light and truth that He offers, the first step is to repent and be baptized. He has commanded that first step for everyone. There are

people in this conference with authority given to them by Jesus Christ to baptize you.

Even if you do not want truth that we offer, we will accept any truth you can share, because our religion is truth.

We believe Jesus Christ was sent to this world as a savior, and that He will bring all mankind back from the dead to live again. And we believe He is the judge of the world. We practice our religion in His name, and testify of His Divine status.

Thank you for listening. I close this talk in the name of Jesus Christ.

[Transcription v1.1]