

Unity in Humanity
Interfaith Celebration
Online Conference
June 7, 2020
Denver C. Snuffer, Jr.

Jill: Yes, go ahead and begin. Thank you.

Denver: I hate to do so because I've been enjoying what the others have said and wish they had spoken longer.

I had not thought about what to say leading up to the get-together today other than I would listen and then respond. But this week I got an email that I wanna read to you. This is from a woman who emailed, asking this question:

How do we deal with anger towards God? I'm struggling getting along with the idea that I need to praise and love and worship a God that I feel completely closed off to and forsaken and unloved. There's no connection there, and all I have inside of me is this growing, red-hot anger, and I can't shake it. It's frustrating to listen to others saying how great God is and how easily accessible He is because it just isn't true for some people. Some people may go their whole life without God giving them any relief or acknowledgment just because that's their trial this round. I need to know how to deal with that. I know He's real. I know He exists. But I cannot understand how God allows the pain and horrors that some people on Earth go through—the terrible things that happen to children and innocent people, the unspeakable things that people do. I feel as though God is playing a game, and we are all chess pieces to Him.

Well, I liked Rupinder's observation that the first step in the process is a *problem* because I think that is where it always begins. You have to start with a problem.

Well, I intend to address that question, but I was reminded in Sugopi's comment about *sunrises and sunsets are God's dress*. I live in the eastern part of the city of Sandy in the Salt Lake County basin. On the East, there's a wall of mountains called the Wasatch Front. And on the West, across the other side of the valley, there's a wall of mountains, and they're called the Oquirrh. Because I live so close to the Wasatch mountains, the sun will begin to shine in the valley on the Oquirrh mountains far to the West. And then, the sunlight will creep slowly across the valley as the sun rises to clear the Wasatch Front mountains until finally, the sunlight hits my house where I live in the far East at the foothill or at the foot of the mountain. Then, when the sun sets in the evening, it disappears behind the mountains on the Oquirrh in the West. And then, the shadow begins to grow, and it grows until it finally covers the Wasatch mountains that I live next to.

In wintertime, the snow-covered Wasatch mountains in the bright sunlight reflect so much light that it hurts your eyes to look at them. You really need to use sunglasses if you're gonna spend a lot of time looking at the sunlight reflecting off the mountains. And sometimes after

a snowstorm, the snow has been so thick in what it has done to cover the earth that the trees themselves are no longer green; they're just white. They look like white, jagged teeth sticking out all across the tops of the mountains. But they're white, and they blend in brilliantly with this color.

As the sun sets, as it goes down in the evening and disappears behind the Oquirrh mountains, the shadow (the last light of the day) creep up the Wasatch mountains to the very top, and just the highest peaks have the last bit of light on them before it disappears into shadow, everything being shadow. But because of the angle of the sun as it creeps up the mountain, once it gets about halfway up the mountain, the light is no longer white. It becomes pink, and it becomes blue and purple and lavender—and hues and shades of subtle change that are so different from one another.

Sugopi mentioned that there are artists on Earth, but the greatest artist is God. Watching that every night, it is never the same. It is always different, and it is always beyond the artistry of any man or woman to capture because it is alive, and it is moving; it is light itself. And the canvas that God uses is the canvas He created by the snow and by the mountain and by the Creation. No artist can capture what we get to watch and see every night if we'll just open our eyes and look.

Jesus Christ taught a sermon. In His sermon, He said that:

[His Father] makes [the] sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends the rain on the just and on the unjust. ...If you love only them that love you, what reward have you? Do not even the publicans the same? ...if you salute your brethren only, what do you more than others? Do not even the publicans the same? You are therefore commanded to be perfect even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect [and to love everyone]. (Matthew 3:26 RE)

God's gift of this beautiful nightly display of brilliant color and subtle hues and artistry is a gift that's given to everyone, but it may not be a gift appreciated by hardly anyone. It **is** his gift to us.

In the book of the Psalms (which are hymns): *The Lord, he is God. It is he that made us and not we ourselves...The Lord is good. His mercy is everlasting...his truth endures to all generations (Psalms 100:1).*

We are part of that Creation, and we belong here in this Creation. And we're designed to appreciate what it is that He has done in making this Creation for us.

Someone asked a question: Why are the prayers sung? Prayers for a community are best when they are offered in unison, but **speaking** in unison is very hard to accomplish without a cadence that allows people to stay on the same word at the same time with the other people who are repeating the same words of a prayer. And so, one way that has been devised (in order to keep prayers synchronized between various voices and have them speak the same words at the same moment) is to turn them into hymns so that everyone together can raise their voice and speak the same syllable and make the same sound at the same time. And so,

when Delmar Bondi beats the drum to give the cadence and when Sugopi plays the harmonium to set the tune, what each of them are doing is a reflection of a culture that is seeking to have the prayers unified, to have the prayers united to become one in order to express the desire of the heart of the whole and to do it in a uniform way.

The religion of God and the greatness of God is so vast and so all-encompassing that it's impossible for one person or one group or one denomination or one movement to have held onto it all. The religion began in the beginning with God standing in the presence of the first parents who were the father and the mother of the entire race of humanity and teaching them about everything there is to know, to worship, to understand, to appreciate, to love, to share, to feel, to understand. But we have done a bad job of preserving that.

We had, at the beginning, the truth taught; and then, we had the truth lost. The process of losing truth is called *apostasy*, but apostasy does not mean that everything is lost. It means that some has been lost because anything less than all of it is less than the true religion. And so, apostasy causes us to only keep part of the religion. But all religion, in all cultures, in all denominations everywhere in the world, have a common root.

From time to time, God has sent messages back into the world. Those messages are *restorations* in which some of what has been lost is then restored again to help complete the picture. I believe there have been **many** apostasies. Correspondingly, there have been **many** restorations. But a restoration, to complete the **entire** story, has to return us all the way back to the beginning, has to give us the opportunity to have, once again, everything that was here at the start that unifies together and weaves into one great whole **all** of the truths.

In some of the religions that we have heard glimpses of today, there are greater truths about some characteristics than have been preserved in the Christian tradition. We need to have reunited **all** the truths from **all** the limited apostasies (that nevertheless contain truths) into one great restoration—back into a whole—with the guidance and assistance of God.

There was a sermon that was delivered by the apostle Paul two thousand years ago when he went to Greece to teach about the restoration that Jesus Christ had brought about. The audience that he spoke to were a group of philosophers in Greece. That culture, that nation, that society has long since perished. The temples that were built back then have fallen into disarray and many of them into dust, but the **sermon** that Paul taught on Mars Hill has been preserved, and we have a record of the sermon that he taught. He referred to them. He said:

*You ignorantly worship [God whom I] declare unto you. God...made the world and all things therein, ...He is the Lord of heaven and earth, [and] dwells not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men's hands as though he needed anything, seeing he gives to **all** life, and breath, and all things...he is not far from every one of us, for in Him we live, and move, and have our being. We are also His offspring. (Acts 10:14 RE)*

Those words of Paul on Mars Hill are echoed even more clearly in some of the things that have been said by Delmar and by Rupinder and by Jeremiah and by Sugopi today. Sometimes we lose track of how closely connected we are, every one of us, to God.

There was a king who delivered a sermon as he was ending his reign. In his old age and infirmity, he felt no longer able to provide the leadership, the guidance, and the presiding role of a king in helping bring peace to his people and serve them. And so, he called his people together, and he gave them his last bit of advice before resigning as the king and allowing his son to be the one who would lead the community after that by teaching and defending and helping it. And in King Benjamin's talk, like Paul, he mentioned that *[God] has created you from the beginning and [is] preserving you from day to day by lending you breath that [you] may live and move and do according to your own will, and even supporting you from one moment to another* (Mosiah 1:8 RE).

The story that we have of the Creation in the Bible says that God put into... He breathed the breath of life into Adam. King Benjamin, talking thousands of years later, says that in you (in you, right now, every one of you), God is *lending you breath that [you] may live*. If you want to know how close you are, in reality, to God, just hold your breath. Exclude—throw away—the act of breathing that God is causing to occur in you at this very moment, and hold your breath for as long as you can. Then, when you take your next gasp for air, realize the power to do that is **loaned** to you by God. He is that intimate to you. He is that connected to you.

In a revelation that was given to Joseph Smith about this Creation, God, speaking to Joseph, told him that:

[Christ is] in all and through all things, the light of truth, and that truth shines. This is the light of Christ, as also he is in the sun and the light of the sun, and the power thereof by which it was made; as also he is in the moon and...the light of the moon and the power thereof by which it was made; as also the light of the stars and the power thereof by which they were made; and the earth also, and the power thereof, even the earth upon which you stand. ...And the light which now shines, which gives you light, is through him who enlightens your eyes, which is the same light that quickens your understandings, which light proceeds forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space: the light which is in all things, which gives life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sits upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things. (T&C 86:1 RE)

God is everywhere. The light of God is in you. If it were not in you, you would not have the power to breathe, to think, to live, to move, and to even be sustained by God's power from moment to moment to continue in your existence. We, in this present form, are not self-existent. We are dependent upon the energy, the power, and the force of God to keep us maintained as His creation. There are components about us that are coeternal with God, but that doesn't mean that we, as an organized being, existed from all eternity. God created us, but He did this long ago and far away.

Concerning this Creation in that same revelation:

There is no space in...which there is no kingdom, and there is no kingdom in which there is no space, either a greater or a lesser kingdom. And unto every kingdom is...a law, and unto every law there are certain bounds also, and conditions. All things are comprehended by God and all things are before him and all things are round about him...he is above all things and in all things and...through all things, and is round about all things, and all things are by him and of him, even God, for ever and ever...The earth rolls upon her wings, and the sun gives his light by day, and the moon gives her light by night, and the stars also give their light as they roll upon their wings, in their glory, in the midst of the power of God. ...Unto what shall I liken these kingdoms that you may understand? Behold all these are kingdoms, and any man who has seen any or the least of these has seen God moving in his majesty and power... The day shall come when you shall comprehend even God, being quickened in him and by him. Then shall you know that you have seen [him], that I am, and that I am the true light that is in you, and that you are in me; otherwise you could not abound. (T&C 86:6-8 RE)

Everything you can see, everything that you can experience, every sense that you are able to employ is a manifestation of God lending you this intelligence in order to comprehend Him.

When people believe themselves to be wise and smart and good and holy, we really do delude ourselves. No matter how intelligent we may think ourselves, the fact is we know practically nothing, and we will only be here a short time period.

God is everywhere and in everything, and we should be in awe of Him. Using everything that we have the ability to assemble, using all of our science, using all of our finest instrumentation, using every mechanism that we can devise, we know that approximately 68% of the energy in the universe is what is called *dark energy*. It's called dark energy because we know it's there; we haven't a clue what it is. Using that same science and ability and instrumentation, we know that 27% of the universe is comprised of *dark matter*. We know it's there because physics suggests its presence. We don't have a clue what it is. The total of these two means that 95% of the universe we can detect is composed of things we cannot see, we cannot understand, we cannot comprehend. We detect and comprehend, at best, only five percent of all that exists using our best science and best instruments to examine the universe.

On this world—just this world—depending upon the degree of humility that we acknowledge about our present understanding, we may only know of somewhere between 1% and 14% of the life forms that exist on this planet. Of the known life forms that we know about, humanity makes up no more than .001% of that life.

If we are not in awe of God, then we have an awfully small universe and an awfully large ego and an awfully ignorant vantage point. The greatness of the religions that we have heard from today (from the very first with Delmar to the last we heard from) is that the approach of the religion is the acknowledgment of something far greater than ourselves, and the sense of awe and humility that we approach that greatness stays beyond us.

God may make himself known from time to time, but even when He does so, it's difficult for (first of all) man to take it in and then, having taken it in, difficult for man to comprehend what it is that has been given to him and taken in. And then, it is something altogether more challenging and more difficult to turn that into something that can be explained even in part. But the greatest challenge is, then, to comprehend enough in order to be able to teach it. We've had great teachers in many religions, but I think it is foolish to suggest that the greatest teachers that have been out there have ever been able to adequately convey what it is that they took in because the challenge is too vast.

I liked the reference that Delmar made to his grandparents who were involved in ceremonial worship and ceremonial tradition. I understand why Rupinder says at some point along the path of progression, you reach a point at which you no longer need a ritual or a ceremony.

But the fact is that some kinds of vast information can be conveyed in the way that Jeremiah conveyed it—by telling a story, by giving a tradition. The story has embedded within it symbols that are expansive, that grow outward, that have more meaning than simply *the wolf*; more meaning than simply *the moon*; more meaning than simply *the paint on the face*. They have a library of material that they're trying to convey in a shorthanded way.

And so, the ceremony that Delmar Bondi's grandparents conveyed to him when he was a youth were not simply theater. They were an attempt to take a large amount of information and to compress it into a handful of symbols and then to deliver the handful of symbols so that someone who takes it in can then look at and reflect upon that handful of symbols and to say, "Within this symbol, I see this entire library of material; and within this symbol, I see this library of material; and within that one..." And so, ritual becomes one of the ways in which religion is intended to strike the chord in the heart and convey into the mind and into the senses that you can take information in—something that is beyond merely the senses that we work with; something that reaches out into the universe and touches that infinite.

There is this concept that Christians speak about that's called the *Holy Ghost*; it's also called the *Comforter*, that Holy Ghost, that *concept* much abused in Christianity, much misunderstood, much voiced about (a lot of silly notions), but in part of the restoration of information that has come about in these last two centuries—because we believe that God is continuously trying to restore—one of the things that we've been given in the last two centuries is a description of what that Holy Ghost includes. Let me read those words to you:

It is given to abide in you: the record of heaven, the Comforter, the peaceable things of immortal glory; the truth of all things; that which quickeneth all things, that which maketh alive all things; that which knoweth all things, and hath all power according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice, and judgment. (Moses 6:61; see also Genesis 4:9 RE)

That is the Holy Ghost that—when we allow ourselves to quiet down; when we allow ourselves to take in; when we recognize the breath that we rely upon to remain conscious; when we realize that the colors that we behold with our eyes are loaned to us as a sensibility given to us by God—at that moment, you're connecting to God. At that moment, He is present

with you. At that moment, you should be in awe of Him **sharing** with you that capacity because He **is** with you.

So, when the woman is struggling getting along with the idea that she needs to praise and love and worship a God “I feel completely closed off to and forsaken and unloved,” the place to begin is to recognize it’s an expression of God’s love to you that you can see. It’s an expression of God’s love, kindness, and generosity to you that you can breathe. It’s an expression of God’s love, kindness, and sustaining power that He makes the rain to fall and the sun to shine on both the good and the evil. It’s an expression of His love and His presence with you that you have the opportunity to be here, to be part of a family, to be connected with others, to converse and to eat and to feel love and to feel kindness.

The problem is not that you’re not connected to God—because every one of us is. The problem is that the foolish religious tradition that you have been taught shuts your mind down so that you do not comprehend His presence **in** you, His presence **with** you, and His presence in this world that you now occupy.

The pictures of the birds that were put up by Sugopi reminded me... I try to hike every day. My wife and I can go out and... In winter, nature has very few of the birds around that we see here during the summer. The songbirds come and go. The butterflies come and go. But winter has its own dress, has its own coloration, has its own beauty. We’ve waded through snowdrifts up to our thighs, and we’ve heard the stirring of animals that are underneath the layer of snow (small mammals that crawl around underneath there). We’ve seen the predator birds that stay around during wintertime that will listen keenly to locate their prey and will then fly into and be beneath the surface of the snow in order to catch their prey and in order to survive in the winter months. And then, in the summer, when the flowers are blossoming—the return of the butterflies and the hummingbirds that eat on nectar and the bees and the other life there (less dependent upon the loss of lives of their fellow-creatures) and, instead, eat in the vegetable world and survive sometimes on nothing more than nectar.

“A land flowing with milk and honey” was what was promised anciently to Israel. Milk and honey do not require the death of anything. They’re produced as a symbol of the abundance of life, the promise of life.

When the ancient Israelites built a temple in the land of Jerusalem, they had waited generations to build it because their holy place was really a tent, a tabernacle. It was portable, and they moved it from place to place. But they finally built a fixed location for the temple in the city of Jerusalem. They built the temple on a hilltop previously occupied by the Jebusites that was not actually acquired under the jurisdiction of Israel until the reign of King David. They’d been living there for generations, but the Jebusites retained it.

King David, in the final attempt to conquer that site, said whoever was first over the wall would become the captain of the Lord’s hosts, hoping to displace his nephew Joab, who was the only person contemporaneous with David that scared David and frightened him. And He was hoping that someone would be over the wall first, and maybe he could get a new captain

of the Lord's host and be rid of his nephew. But Joab was the first one over the wall and conquered the final stronghold. And so, the site on which the temple would be built was obtained by Israel.

David thought that he would be the one to build it, but the Lord told him, "No, you're too bloody a man. You've shed too many lives; you've done too many things that disqualify you." And so, while David could gather the materials, the Lord commanded him **not** to be the one to build it. It was his son who built it. And so, Solomon built the temple, the (finally) brick-and-mortar building that would house the oracles of God and be the holy place that people came for festivals and worship and sacrifices.

Well, it was built on a prominence, the former stronghold of the Jebusites. It was built on a prominence, and to the east was the Mount of Olives. The sunrise in the East in Jerusalem anciently would rise as the sun came, and the sun would then (as it does here in this valley), it would then start and creep down until the sun cleared the mountain, and then it was visible everywhere.

The eastern wall of the temple that was built by Solomon had overlaid on it gold (a thin layer of gold, but it was gold) on the eastern face. So, as the sun crept up from the East, the sun on the top of the eastern face of the temple would reflect that sunlight and the gold on the temple as the sun rose. And so, for some period of time, every morning as the sun rose in the East, there would be a time where you could not see the sun because it was blocked from view by the Mount of Olives. But you could see the reflection of the sun in the gold on the temple, and it would appear as though the day was beginning with the sun shining from the house of God, as the sun returned and light returned each day to the earth.

It's just a symbol, but it tied together (in symbolic form) the presence of God, the ceremonies, the rituals, the traditions that remind us, that attempt to preserve for us information—so that even in our apostate states (wherever we are in whatever state of apostasy we may find ourselves), we can have hope that God will renew that and that that light of understanding will increase and will grow brighter and brighter—until, at last, we return again to a perfect day: a day in which there is no darkness; a day in which there are no shadows left around the edges of our religion; no more separation and division, because the shadow does not illuminate the truth that we hold dear in our hearts because that also is returned again, renewed again, restored again. And we find ourselves in a vigorous relationship, connected to one another—because a faith that is big enough to incorporate all truths from all sources becomes big enough also to connect us to one another. It's in that search and that desire for restoration that we all have hope of returning once again and finding that we all stand on common ground. In fact, we all stand on the same ground.

Now, I've seen various agendas for today, but my understanding is that we're supposed to end this at noon, and I hate to impose upon people by dragging something out longer than what they had planned to participate in. There's like two minutes left until noon. Is there any... Are there any questions that I oughta take a look at before we wrap this up?

Jill: Yes, Denver, we have just a couple of questions that you might be able to answer. I guess, first, can you please tell us a little bit about your spiritual background and what Scriptures you're quoting from? (Because I didn't really introduce the speakers.)

Denver: Oh, yeah. I'm an excommunicated Mormon, I suppose. I'm a free-range, non-denominational believer in God's work in all ages at all times, and I believe that God did something in the life of Jesus Christ to bring about truth. I believe that that became corrupted sometime after the death of Jesus Christ and that Christianity preserved and perpetuated an echo but not the fulsome thing.

I believe that Martin Luther was inspired by God to rebel against Catholicism because Catholicism had become oppressive. And Martin Luther's rebellion against Catholicism not only helped free people from the tyranny of Roman Catholicism, it helped Roman Catholicism repent and return and improve itself. As much as Martin Luther did to help spawn a new kind of interpretation of Christianity that allowed people to believe in Christ and feel themselves connected to God outside of the institution of Roman Catholicism, Roman Catholicism itself looked at the problems that Martin Luther criticized and underwent internal improvement, internal correction, internal growth. It was a... inspired moment that helped all of Christianity.

I believe that that led, in turn, to (ultimately) refugees fleeing Europe and coming to the Americas in order to get religious freedom—because the Protestant Reformation did not result in the freedom of religion. It resulted in Lutheran nations and Catholic nations and Church of England nations. And those nations all had (by force of arms!) government-imposed religion in which some forms of belief were favored and some were disfavored; and some of the disfavored were not only persecuted, they were killed! John Knox, the “apostle of murder,” was responsible for murdering people that he had religious disagreements with.

Protestant fathers practiced Christianity in the rebellion against Rome—but **mirroring** many of the **very same** things they **hated** about Rome. And so, when the Americas were discovered, there were many people that left their European nations to migrate to the Americas precisely because they wanted to practice worship of God without someone forcing them to. And so, one of the very first things that—once the Americas rebelled and got their independence—one of the very first things they did after establishing the government was to mandate the freedom to practice religion according to the dictates of their own conscience so that everyone could believe and worship according to the dictates of their own belief, their own connection to God.

And so, it took all of these events to move forward in order for God to then have the ability to do something about Christianity to correct it again. In 1805, He sent into the world a young man through whom He would begin this process of restoring and repairing. That young man had a common name, Joseph Smith, and I believe that through him a restoration of the truth began.

That restoration is today... It's called “Mormonism” by most people, but Mormonism itself is fractured into some 80 different kinds of denominations. Mormonism is not unified.

Mormonism is a **fracture**. It's much like what you see with Roman Catholicism and Protestantism and all of the offshoots of Protestantism. There's many, many different forms of Mormonism. God spoke to Joseph Smith.

I have a friend... I've written a number of books. I have a friend; I met him because he read the first book I wrote. He grew up a Mormon. He was a Mormon missionary, and he got to the point in his Mormonism that he felt like it was no longer satisfying to the soul. So, he undertook a journey to try and find enlightenment. He went to India. He studied in India. He found a Guru. He got his enlightenment and his understanding there. And then, after he had spent years in India, he returned. And he came back because his roots were in Utah; so, he came back to Utah. But upon returning to Utah, what he found (or to his surprise) was that contained within many of the revelations given to Joseph Smith, there were concepts about enlightenment that he had to go to India to discover, but he found it back here. He read my book, and he contacted me, and he said, "I don't understand how you were able to find it in Mormonism. It took me leaving it and coming back before I could find what there was that was within it."

I became a member of the particular kind of Mormonism that's called The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (or LDS). I was a member of that church for 40 years to the day, to the exact day. And on the 40th year anniversary to the day, I was excommunicated from the Church because I do not believe it is possible to have an authentic relationship with God and to also be subordinate to hierarchical control, administrative enforcement, and surrendering to someone else who exercises authority over you. And so, excommunicated from Mormonism because of the things which I teach—but I base what I believe upon the Bible, the Book of Mormon (which was translated by Joseph Smith from an ancient book), and revelations that have been given by God to Joseph Smith. And because **those** things have led me to connect to God, I believe in revelations that God has also given to me. But I don't stand at the head of any organization. I believe I am one among a group of equals, of people who are likewise searching to try to find authentic connection to God because I believe that God is **in** and **with** and **around** all of us. It's hard to convey adequately how closely connected we are all to God using **only** concepts that are found in Christianity and in Mormonism.

It's easier when you appeal to and you incorporate also some of the concepts that we have heard today from an Apache, from Rupinder and his exposition, from Jeremiah (the Blackfoot storyteller), and from Sugopi. There are things that they have said that come straight out of the Scriptures that have been restored to us but are concepts that we do not adequately express even though our Scriptures contain them. We need others who come from a Sikh background or from a Hare Krishna background to articulate and to put into words these vast concepts.

I am someone trying to understand and to teach truth with a recognition that the greatness of God dwarfs the capacity of any man to adequately convey to another. The best that we can do is to invite and to persuade and to say and to deliver constantly the message: *Come, come and see for yourself.*

I believe that God will reveal Himself to everyone. The way in which He may reveal Himself at first may be very limited. It may be very small, but we ought to appreciate even that, and we ought to prize even that. By the time a person is given the opportunity to stand in the presence of God, they're not standing in the presence of God because God is trying to impress them or because God is trying to give them greater faith in Him. It's because, in all of the little ways in which God has previously revealed and made Himself known, the person has accepted with deep appreciation and humility and come to the recognition that we are all really, utterly dependent upon Him.

None of us are great. The best we can offer is our submission and our humble support to God and our fellow men because God cares as much for each one of us as He cares for any one of us. And so, none of us can say we're great, we're good, we're holy. Should God make us holy for even a moment so that we can endure His presence, that's a gift from Him, and it departs because when we are no longer in His presence, this earth drags us down. We get tired, we get cold, we get hungry. We have to constantly war against the elements of this world. And so, every one of us ought to stand in awe continually of God and who He is.

All I am is someone trying to promote faith and confidence in the existence of, the worthiness of, the greatness of, and our dependence upon God.

Jill: Thank you so much for that answer, Denver. I know you are very considerate of others' time. I was wondering if you have time for one more question, or if you'd like to end now?

Denver: Yeah, yeah, we're only ten minutes—eleven minutes over. But yeah, go ahead.

Jill: In your view, will the restoration of all be accomplished by a single person or a group? Will it require concurrent restorations among many religions, eventually all uniting together as one?

Denver: There's a prophecy about how God intends to gather together into one in the last days and how they're gonna be. According to the Book of Mormon, it's a testimony of God's dealings with one group of ancient people. But the Book of Mormon makes it clear that God's dealings have not been limited to one or two groups, but there have been multiple groups to whom He has visited and provided information. The testimony of all of those are intended to grow together. The Book of Mormon confirms that that is ultimately an objective.

Prophecies require that there be a house built, that there be a people gathered, that there be a location where God can take up His abode. The earth ultimately is going to be redeemed and returned to an original state that was described in Scripture as being a New Creation in which there was a garden planted eastward in Eden in which God could come, and He could visit directly, face to face, with man. The purpose of the temple is to construct another prototype that is symbolically representative of that same condition in which it is possible for angels, God, men, the living and the dead to be reunited as a single spot from which a restoration and a return of everything will spread until it finally fills the whole earth. But it begins in a single spot at a single place.

My understanding of how that's going to come about is that a command will at some point be given about a location. A command will be given at some point about the facility. Direction will be provided in order to put that into motion so it exists on the earth. And as with so many of the prophecies that God has given, we tend to view them *vast* and *macro*, and God tends to fulfill them *small* and *micro*.

The coming of Jesus Christ into this world was, on a **global** basis, almost inconsequential to the notice of mankind. It appears that the largest audience that we can confirm that Jesus Christ ever spoke to was about 7,000 people. It appears that most of them turned away from Him because of His doctrine, because of His teaching, because of what He was insisting the truth to include. It appears that by the time He gets to the end of His ministry, He is slain on the cross; and then, He is resurrected from the dead; and He ministers for a period of about 40 days in and around Jerusalem; then, He ascends into heaven; that at the moment of His ascension into heaven that His followers at that point were approximately 500 people. So, the Lord Jesus Christ comes into the world as nothing more than sort of a local disturber of the peace. And by the time that He has finished His ministry and He's resurrected and ascends into heaven, He has about 500 followers.

If you look at the scriptural prophecies, the symbols embedded in the Law of Moses, the foreshadowing of a pascal lamb that would be slain in order to rescue and save mankind; if you look at what Isaiah foretold, what the Psalms celebrated; if you look at the vast body of literature, and then you compare that to the fulfillment of all that in the life of Christ, it would be very easy (if you're being fair about it) to take a look at that and to say, "God fulfills His great designs in very small ways."

And so, in some ways, the easiest way for God to get His work done is for the world to give little heed or little notice of it until it has been completed. No man yet ever built a temple alone. It's just beyond the capacity of a single individual to do. And so, there has to be... There has to be a temple-building people, if for no other reason than to support the cost of what it would take to build a temple. Even if you, like Solomon, used professional builders from King Tyre to send down to construct the temple because the expertise did not exist among the Israelites to accomplish the work, you still had to have the Israelites to support the budget that King Solomon had to employ in order to pay the king in order to bring the people and the material to accomplish the work. Even if it's done with small professional labor, it's still gonna fulfill the prophecies. It's still gonna meet all the criteria that has been given in Scripture. And it's still going to accomplish everything that has been promised to all people.

How we then gather together all of what are called in Scripture, the *rich treasures* (see T&C 58:3) from the earth... Those rich treasures from the earth are not rubies and diamonds and gold and silver. They are records of truth. They're the truths found in the traditions in the religions.

One of the things that's required in the design of the temple is that there be a treasury. But the word "treasury" ... That the room is viewed by some people as having money and gold and silver and value—it's not that. The treasury of the temple are where the records are kept. It's where the greatest truths are to be housed. They're a place for preserving the great truths

that God has planted around the earth that are to be gathered together so that there is one place that houses the most valuable thing that we have. It was not the marble temples on Mars Hill that endured. That's not where the treasure was found when the apostle Paul spoke to the Greek philosophers. It was in the truth that was taught by Paul in the sermon he delivered on Mars Hill. All those people have long since been reduced to dust. And yet, the sermon has been preserved. That's the treasure. That's what needs to be gathered.

Okay! Now we're 20 minutes over, so we should wrap up. Thank you all.

Jill: Thank you so much, Denver, for speaking today.