

Hitchhike Adventure From Niigata City to Nagano and Tokyo



This is an article I wrote at the end of August 2005. It was only my old website which is no longer on-line and I am therefore reposting it.

I hitchhiked from Niigata City to Matsumoto City in Nagano, and then to Tokyo and then back to Niigata in 3 days, a distance of 700 kilometers (440 miles) in 16 vehicles. Among these were 3 trucks and at least one luxury car. Among the people who picked me up was one stock broker, one high school teacher, 4 foreigners, and 2 relatively wealthy men one of whom is a nation wide famous entertainer! Three of the cars had small children, two had women without a male companion, and two had large dogs, one a Labrador and the other a German Shepherd.



Jerry Fujio,
Japanese
entertainer

The highlight of this trip was being picked up by a famous entertainer: Jerry Fujio. You may not have heard of him in your country, but everybody in Japan over 35 years old seems to know him quite well! All my Japanese friends have seen him on TV or in a film. His peak of fame seems to be around 1960s. I asked him if people hound him for his autograph. "A long time ago" was his reply. Jerry's mother is English and his father is Japanese. His age seemed to be in his early 70s.

Another highlight was a retired 60 some year old man from the Meguro area of Tokyo driving an expensive car who appeared to be of upper class Japanese society. The reason I say this is because he looked like a company president but didn't act like one. He didn't accept my business card nor even give me his name. He probably didn't want to accept my card because in doing so, he would be obliged to give me his in keeping with Japanese custom. Nevertheless he was very friendly, talkative and laughed a lot! I asked him if he is a member of a secret society. He replied he's a member of a golf club. He

didn't tell me exactly what his profession was except that it was related to education and government but that he was not a politician. I asked him if he knows that the United States is a secret dictatorship run by the [CFR](#), and he replied in the affirmative. I told him that most Americans don't know that. He was surprised and dumbfounded that Americans are so **ignorant** of the fact. Though not a Christian nor a believer in God, he does acknowledge the possibility that the world could have been created by a Great Designer. He said he doesn't believe in Darwinism and claimed that it is not taught in schools in Japan. I thought it strange he would say that because nearly everyone in Japan believes in Darwinian evolution.

A Chinese couple with a baby took me as far as Kurohime (which means "Black Princess") in Nagano, a small mountain town close to the border of Niigata. I didn't know at first the man was Chinese because his Japanese was so good. He is from Harbin and his mother is Japanese. Harbin is part of Manchuria which the Japanese occupied till the end of WW2. He is very knowledgeable about the world and real motivations in politics. We talked about the [Tienanmen Square massacre of 1989](#). I told him I met a Chinese college student in Southern China back in 1998 who believes that nobody was killed in that tragedy. He replied that probably thousands of students died! How quickly the world is forgetting that it ever happened. He knows that there is no real democracy or freedom in China, and especially no freedom of religion.

To learn more about China, its history, and the murder of Chinese citizens by their own government on June 4th and 5th, 1989, please see: [The Tiananmen Square Massacre: From China's Authoritarian Roots to the Iconic "Tank Man"](#)

I never got off the expressway at Kurohime before and so it was an adventure pioneering how to get back on track. There were few cars and so it took me a while to get back on the main road. I did so 3 cars later.



A red Ferrari, \$300,000
of eventual junk

At Kamisato Service Area on the Kan'etsu expressway, a red Ferrari sports car parked right in front of where I stood hitchhiking with my sign. The driver got out and looked at the rear of the Ferrari. His friend from another car walked up and also looked. They looked and looked the longest time. I thought they were literally worshiping that car! They looked at it from all angles and took photographs. If I ever ended up with such a thing, I wouldn't really own it, it would own me! I probably would be thinking about the Ferrari half of the day. I'd get bummed out even if it got the tiniest scratch on its shiny red exterior. Thank God for deliverance from materialism!

I always carry with me Gospel literature and give a copy to every driver. I try to share some seeds of the Word of God in their hearts, as much as I feel they are ready to hear and receive. Most Japanese are very respectful of Jesus Christ. From my experience, the only ones who aren't belong to a radical sect of Buddhism called Sokkagakai from which sprang out of Nichiren

Shoshu which is also intolerant of other faiths. Most Buddhists do respect Jesus and His teachings.

[Regaining My Humanity](#)



US Army soldier Camilo Mejia's story of refusing to return to fight for American big business in Iraq for moral reasons.

[The Rapid Growth of Bamboo](#)



My old website at kt70.com~jamesjpn is no longer on line. I am therefore posting some of the articles from it to this website.

On May 16, 2008 I saw two young bamboo shoots about 3 feet high growing next to my house. I knew because of their thickness they would taller than me in

just a matter of days. And so I thought it would be a fun project to set up a tripod and take a photo of them daily for a few days.

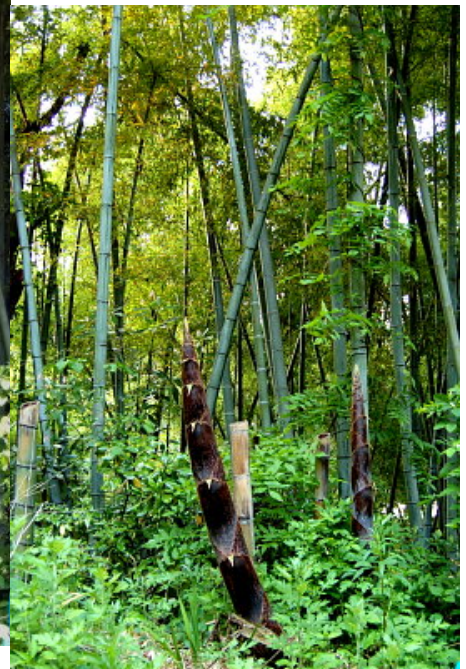
In the photos are two bamboo shoots and three sawed off bamboo stumps. Also notice the many other fully grown bamboo trees in the background. In the first photo taken on May 16, the bamboo shoot in the center is about 2.5 feet high and appears to be growing at an angle in relation to the bamboo stump directly behind it. On May 21, the bamboo in the center is now 256 centimeters or about 8.5 feet tall. It more than tripled its height in 5 days!



May 16, 1:45PM



May 17, 10:30AM



May 18, 5:50PM



May 19, 8:50AM



May 20, 8:30AM The center bamboo has now uprighted itself and is covering the stump behind it.

May 22, 1:10PM The center bamboo is now 3 meters or 9 feet 10 inches in height. I am 183 cm or about 6'1". Its height has nearly quadrupled in only 6 days!



May 28, 8:00AM



June 2, 9:00AM. The bamboo is now approximately 7.8



This bamboo shoot is not yet higher than

meters or 25.7 feet
in height and 4
times my own height.

In 17 days its
height has increased
10 fold! Notice that
there are still yet
no branches or
leaves and that the
bottom half has lost
its thin brown skin.

my knee but it's
already a bit too
big to harvest for
food.

Tips On How to Hitchhike in Japan



With another man also hitchhiking! His partner with him took the photo.

Due to popular request I have compiled a list of tips and lessons I learned over the past several years hitchhiking in Japan. I think the basic tip is to use common sense and have the attitude of, "where there's a will, there's a way."

- Get to the a good intersection of the highway that has a **nice long red traffic light** which builds up a good row of vehicles in front of it when the light turns red. Sometimes I walk 3 or 4 kilometers to get to it, sometimes and sometimes I take train or a bus to get to it.
- I usually stand before the traffic light. The longer the light stays red, the better. I stand near the light when it first turns red and wait for the first car to come. When I think the driver is close enough to see the whites of my eyes, I either hold out my thumb or hold out a sign that shows my destination. If the driver either makes no eye contact with me, shows no interest, or waves his or her hand back and forth indicating "NO!", I proceed to walk up to the next car, and then the next, and then the next until either I get a positive response from the

driver or the traffic light turns green and the cars begin to move again. When the light turns green, I turn around and walk back to the light and wait till it turns red again.

- Sometimes I'll continue to hold out my sign after the light turns green in spite of the fact the traffic is flowing. Sometimes an interested driver who sees my sign though he passes me by and crosses the intersection will return back for me and offer me a ride. This has happened dozens of times.
- I try to present myself well groomed and dress reasonably well in dress pants and a dress shirt, never in jeans. Sometimes I've hitchhiked wearing a suit and tie but I found it really didn't help much.
- I try to make eye contact with the driver and smile. Once he or she makes eye contact, it usually means a ride.
- I made signs showing my destination with A4 size paper and a thick pointed magic marker. I use a clear plastic holder to keep the signs together with the sign of my destination on top. The sign is written in Japanese ideographs (Kanji).



An example sign written on A4 size paper in a plastic folder with other signs below the top sign.

Usually I'll carry the marker and several blank sheets of A4 paper in the plastic holder if I need to make a sign of a new destination. The driver is usually happy to write the Kanji down for me. I can copy Japanese characters if I look at them, but the Japanese will write them much nicer than I can. □ Since 2016 I started using larger binded sketchbooks to make signs. One advantage is the pages are bound and will not fly away in the wind as A4 pages can. I write one kanji on a page and hold the sketchbook open showing two pages. The names of most cities and prefectures in Japan consist of two kanjis. The sign is therefore larger and easier to see from a far distance.



A3 page in a binder can be used for signs.

- A sign should not show a destination that is too far away. On a regular road the destination should be not further than the next major city. The exception to this rule is if your destination is the largest city among all the cities you will be passing. Some examples: Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka, and Niigata.
- At expressway entrances, try to stand at a safe place before the entrance where the cars can easily stop. There are good expressway entrances to hitchhike at, and poor ones. How do you know the difference? By experience!
- If after you catch a ride from a driver entering the expressway who is going toward the direction of your destination but considerably short of it, have him drop you off at the largest service area that is before his exit point. Service areas are better than expressway entrances because

the flow of traffic is always in the direction you want to go. I stand near the facilities on the side of the road where cars would pass when exiting. If you are too obvious or stand too close to the exit ramp, the traffic cops might tell you to leave when they see you.

[Testimonial of Deliverance from Prescription Pain-killers](#)



Dr. John Gideon Harnett's deliverance from pain killers which caused even more pain in the long run.

[James Japan Moved to New Web Hosting Service](#)



Moving jamesjpn.net from Bluehost hosting to Ipage hosting.

[Chuck Baldwin: Some Things I Believe](#)



A summary of Chuck Baldwin's worldview and beliefs.

[Cherry Blossoms in Niigata City](#)



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Adventures in Estonia



In the summer of 1997 I needed to leave Russia and St. Petersburg for a visa renewal trip. Rather than make another visa trip to Helsinki in Finland, I opted for neighboring Estonia instead. As you can see on the map below, the distance from St. Petersburg to the Estonian capital city of Tallinn is not much different than from St. Petersburg to Helsinki, Finland.



And as you see from the maps (see below also), Estonia is the smallest of the three Baltic Republics that were former members of the Soviet Union – by force, not by choice! The other two are Lithuania which is the largest of the three, and Latvia. The only thing they have in common with Russia is a common border. Each Baltic country has its very own language which is not Slavic and therefore not related to the Russian language. The three languages are not related to each other either. Most of the ethnic peoples of these lands would rather have nothing more to do with Russia or the Russian language and tend to be offended if one tries to initiate a conversation with them speaking in Russian. Nevertheless, unless the individuals from neighboring Baltic countries know English or some other common European language between them, they are forced to communicate with each other in Russian, like it or not, because Russian is the only common language they know! Russian was the language of education during Soviet times.



Here we have a closer look at Estonia. You can see that Finland is just across the Baltic Sea. The Estonians have much more in common with the Finns than with the Russians or even the Latvians on its southern border. This is because the Estonians were a Finnish tribe and their language is very similar to Finnish. Like the Finns, they are a hard working people and have rebuilt their country and economy relatively quickly after being set free from the Soviet Union.

After World War 2 Stalin forcibly exiled half the Estonian population to Siberia and replaced them with Russians. If I remember correctly, the ethnic population is roughly 40% Russian and 60% Estonian. On the Estonian side of the border with Russia there is a city called Narva that is 90% Russian. During the breakup of the Soviet Union, some Russians wanted the city to become part of Russia rather than Estonia. But in 1997 the Russians living in Narva were glad they didn't become part of Russia and are happy to live in Estonia! They know they have a much better life in Estonia than they would have had in Russia. The Estonian economy is much better.

In the Summer of 1997 I lived with my missionary friends in the city of Tallinn for one full month. I visited once before for a day on the way to St. Petersburg by land from Poland. My friend Yan drove a tiny Polski Fiat from Warsaw through Lithuania and Latvia. His intention was to re-enter Russia from Latvia but was advised against it as being too dangerous. There are many highway robbers in Russia but few if any in Estonia. So we drove through the Eastern side of Estonia and entered Russia at the border town of Narva. Talk about adventure! If you are bored with life, try driving a car through Eastern Europe some time and enter Russia. You will be greeted by a border guard on the Russian side carrying an AK47 automatic weapon. No joke! I saw it with my own eyes! But that was in 1997. I don't know if they still carry AK47s today.



Andres with ethnic Russian girl who was raised in Estonia. She could speak fluent Estonian and was our happy helper to distribute Gospel literature.



Russian Olga who was raised in Estonia. She couldn't speak Estonia but was a good English speaker and so could get a job selling picture postcards to tourists.



Two Estonian girls holding up a poster that says, "What Everybody Needs is Love!"



Estonian young people. I asked the boy on the right if he likes the Russian population. He replied he doesn't actually hate them but has no Russian friends.

Most of the ethnic Estonians and Latvians in Latvia I met resented being greeted in Russian though they all knew it! In order to talk to the young people in the above photo, I had to greet them first in English! This is because they have great national pride and hate the fact they were taken over by the Russian speaking Soviet Union against their will.

When I was in Riga, Latvia, though people knew me and my friends were foreigners, they would still speak to us in Latvian! My Polish friend would smile and then say in Russian, "I can communicate in only Russian, Polish and English!" They always complied and spoke in Russian.

The young people told me they don't speak English and so I asked them if they could speak Russian. "Sure we can," was the reply, "no problem!" So I pulled out my Estonia Bible and showed them Scriptures explaining in Russian what they meant. This impressed them for they knew I didn't read Estonia but I knew the Bible well enough to find the parts I was looking for. I could recognize the name of the books of the Bible in Estonian.

Before I went to Russia, in Japan around 1992 I met a young lady from Latvia. I was excited to meet her because I was studying Russian then and wanted to practice it with her. But she told me in English she didn't want to speak Russian with me. "That's not our language," she said. "We have our own language."

Interestingly, the Estonians were the worse speakers of Russian. This is because the Estonian language is not an Indo-European language as is Russian, Lithuanian and Latvian.



Russian girl distributing literature to an Estonian boy



Two Estonian girls who received posters.



Right: Lily from San Jose who was a regular monthly supporter of our missionary work in Estonia.



A beach in Tallinn



Estonian ladies.

[The Story of Helen of St. Petersburg, Russia](#)



How life changed for the average Russian after the fall of the Soviet Union.

[Adventure to Teriberka – A Village in the Russian Arctic](#)



On July 31 1996, Yanek from Belarus, Angela from St. Petersburg and I traveled overland by bus from Murmansk to the remote village of Teriberka. We went to visit our friend Marina who was a student we met in Murmansk. These two areas are circled in red on the map below. The distance is a bit more than 100 KM or 60 miles, but it took **5 hours by bus on dirt roads!** Though it was summer, we could still see patches of snow on the ground! Most of the area in between these two places is tundra. There is nothing growing higher than an inch or so from the ground due to the permafrost just beneath the soil.



In the year 2000 a Russian submarine sank not far from where I lived. The city next to Murmansk called Severomorsk is a Russian Navy base. Only Russian military and the local town's people have permission to enter this city. And believe it or not, even the tiny village of Teriberka is part of a military restricted zone. I didn't know that before arrival. On the 3rd day border guards came to Marina's apartment and told me I had until the next morning to leave or be incarcerated!

A map showing the relationship of this area to the rest of the world. You're probably thinking, "What's so special about that village anyway?" It's special to me because it probably is the most remote area I've ever been in the world – a place only missionaries and National Geographic people would want to visit!



A view of Teriberka from Marina's apartment! It was the most miserable looking place I have ever been to in the world!



Belarussian Yanek in front of a typical Teriberka dwelling. The blue sign above the door says, "Welcome".



Yanek, Angela and Teriberka resident Marina near her apartment.



Marina's daughter (right) with a friend on a hill overlooking the Barents Sea (part of the Arctic Ocean). It's August 1st but only 13 degrees Celsius (55F) and windy.

There was nobody else on that beach except for the people with me! It was clean with no litter whatsoever which is unlike most Japanese beaches. Parts of it are rocky with very smooth large stones. Even in the summer the water is too cold to swim in without a wet suit.



Me with Yanek and Angela toward the left on that same hill, August 1, 1996.



Yanek, friend Marina and Angela.



Next day August 2! It warmed up to around 18C (70F)!



Yanek on the same day, same area.



Yanek with Marina. There is not a paved road in the entire village.



In Marina's apartment. Notice the rug hung on the wall? This is very typical of Russian homes. I think the photo was taken with a timer on the camera.

On the third day, two men who said they were government officials came to

Marina's apartment when I was there and asked me if I obtained permission to visit their area. I told them I didn't know I needed permission. Marina told them I am an invited guest. The men said I was in a military area restricted to foreigners (especially Americans!) and that I needed permission. I didn't see a single sign of any military activity at all! They told me to leave at the earliest opportunity and that I may be fined later. But there was no fine and nothing more came of it.

[More photos of Teriberka.](#)

[Adventures in St. Petersburg, Russia](#)



I lived in St. Petersburg, Russia, from August of 1994 to October of 1997. It was known as Leningrad during the time of the Soviet Union. Many people who don't live in St. Petersburg still call it Leningrad! At least they did during my stay in Russia. But I don't remember a resident of St. Petersburg refer to it by the Soviet name. They are proud of their pre-Soviet history when Peter the Great founded the city on the tributary of the Neva river – actually a wetland. The mosquitoes in the summertime are terrible!



Gostiny Dvor on Nevsky Prospect.

The photo is *Gostini Dvor* on the main street, Nevsky Prospect. In 1997 I spent over 2 whole hours looking for a weather thermometer but could not find one. The salespeople kept telling me to go to a pharmacy. I replied, "I'm not looking for a body thermometer! I want a weather thermometer." They replied, "Yes, but they also sell those at the pharmacy." Well, can you guess what happened when I posed the same question to the pharmacy people back then? They looked at me like I was nuts! "This is a drugstore, not a household appliance store!" "I know I know! But the main department store in town **TOLD me** to come to you!" And so I was bounced back and forth about 3 times before I finally gave up. A few weeks later I went back to my old neighborhood in

Chicago and found what I was looking for in a Dollar Shop in a matter of minutes.



Nostalgic communist lady

The lady on the right is a nostalgic communist who is campaigning for the return of communism. Behind her are photos of Stalin, Lenin, and a contemporary politician named Zugannof. If you guessed by the sour look on her face that she doesn't like me, you're correct. She knows that I am a foreigner and a Christian missionary. I just smiled back at her and walked on.



A beggar in St.
Petersburg

St. Petersburg is situated on a tributary, and so it is divided into several small islands that are linked by bridges and tunnels. Here is a typical beggar in Petrogradskaya Ostrov (Petersburg Island). It is hard to tell which beggars are really in need and who is faking. Some are professional beggars who actually pay the Mafia to beg on their turf. After a day's work of soliciting donations, they can relax in a fine restaurant eating a good meal. This is something I could not afford to do when I was there!



James and Helen

There was real poverty in St. Peterburg when I was there. I often visited a poor lady named Helen. Here I am with her in 1997. But though she was old and needy, she never begged. She taught English and got paid in groceries. Sometimes I would bring her food and gifts. Read [more about Helen](#), a former interpreter who helped in an interview with the famous Yuri Gagarin, the first man to be shot into space into orbit!



Giving a talk about the meaning of
Easter in a school in St. Petersburg

Here is a picture of me and my friends in a school in St. Petersburg. It is close to Easter and I am giving a talk to the pupils on the meaning of Easter – the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I had the total support of the school teachers and principal to do so. Do you think I could get away with this in a

public school in my homeland, the USA? Only deep somewhere in a rural area in the State of Indiana where the Amish live perhaps.



With Natasha Blond

Here I am with Natasha Blond in a park in front of a horse. Isn't she pretty? The horse was kinda pretty too. Her family name is not "Blond" but I named her that because of her real 100% natural blond hair, smooth as silk! You can tell that I really liked Natasha Blond! But alas, she was way too young for me.



Selling audio-visuals at an exhibition in St. Petersburg

In the photo is Russian Stephanie, American Nat, and me at the main exhibition hall in town. We are offering audio-visual teaching material for children. This is partly how we supported ourselves. The rest of the support came from donations from the headquarters of The Family and monthly donations from my faithful friends in Japan to whom I wrote monthly newsletters of my missionary activities in Russia.



Lydia with a women from Georgia

In the picture on the right is Lydia (right) talking to a lady from the former Soviet republic of Georgia. I don't know why in English we say "Georgia" because the correct pronunciation doesn't sound anything like the US state of Georgia. It sounds more like Gruzia. Lydia was a friend of the head of security at the main exhibition hall of St. Petersburg. He would let us inside for free when everyone else had to pay \$1.00. A dollar doesn't sound like much now but it sure did then! That was 5000 RUBLES!! It was nice to walk around with the head of security. This way the other guards would get to know us and leave us alone while we offered our teaching materials to the guests.



Lydia by a vendor of flowers

Here's Lydia again on a street by a vendor of flowers. Lydia is from Kiev, Ukraine. People often remarked that she spoke with an accent, unlike a Ukrainian. This is due to her learning English and being with missionaries

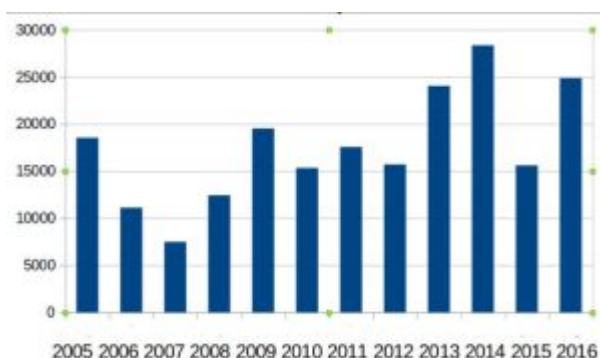
from America. She married and has a one-year-old daughter named Diane.

Exposing the “Chosen People” Scam



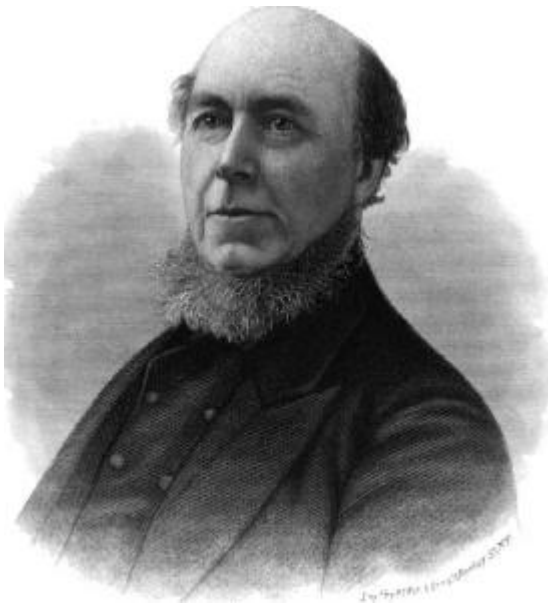
The full Marching to Zion documentary by Steven L. Anderson.

Distances Hitchhiked Since year 2005 / Sharing Christ with the Japanese



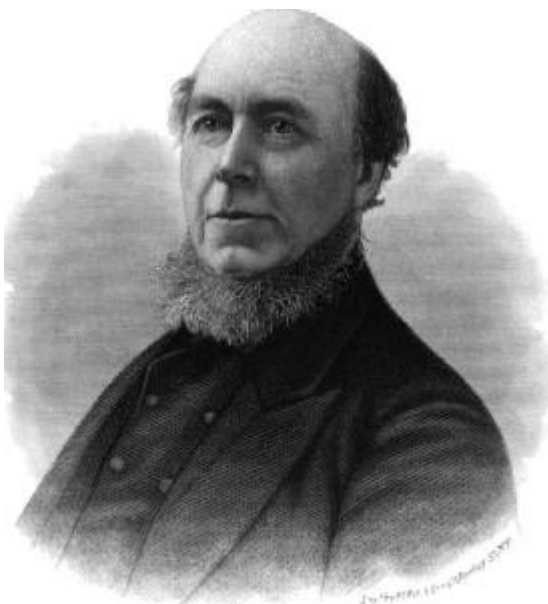
A white American hitchhiked throughout Japan consistently over a 20-year period.

The Bible and the Priest of Rome



A Roman Catholic priest tries to take away young Charles Chiniquy's Bible because the Catholic church does not want us to learn the Word of God. His father prevents that.

Young Lawyer Abraham Lincoln Refuses Payment for his Services from Charles Chiniquy



Abraham Lincoln defended Roman Catholic priest Charles Chiniquy in a serious

criminal case when Chiniquy was falsely accused of a crime by his bishop.
They won the case and the bishop was exposed.