



IN THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN, AN UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITY

BY STEVE TOWN, THE SON OF ALLIANCE
FORMER INTERNATIONAL WORKERS TO JAPAN

On April 30, 2019, Japan's emperor abdicated after a 30-year reign. Akihito is the first Japanese monarch to do so in two centuries. Historically, the Japanese have believed their emperor is a god. According to tradition, Emperor Jimmu ("Divine Warrior")—said to be the grandson of the sun goddess Amaterasu—ascended as Japan's first emperor in 660 BC. Crown Prince Naruhito, Akihito's eldest son, assumed the throne May 1. But he has yet to complete the enthronement ceremony, scheduled for October 22, 2019.

A key to opening the door to Christianity in Japan is the emperor's humanity, as his deification could be linked to the nation's many spiritual strongholds. Likewise, there could be a correlation between the lifting of imperial deification and the country's evangelization. After all, it would be difficult to claim the emperor is a god if he can abdicate his position.

This event represents an unprecedented opportunity. By praying for and sharing Christ with the Japanese, believers can have a part in ushering in a spiritual awakening not seen since Jesuit missionaries brought the gospel to Japan in the 16th century—and

more than 300,000 Japanese embraced Christ. After Christianity was banned, thousands of believers were executed. In the 1800s when Japan opened its doors to the West, The Alliance and other Protestant missionaries arrived. But despite years of devoted service, today only 0.58 percent of Japanese know Jesus (JoshuaProject.net).

To understand the country's resistance to the gospel, we may need to look at the emperor's enthronement ceremony. Traditionally, the incoming Japanese emperor performs a secret ritual in which he contacts his dead ancestors, announces to them his ascendancy, and invites them to enter into him. The ceremony also unites the emperor with the sun goddess. He leaves the ritual possessing divine qualities.

It is time for believers to reclaim Japan from centuries of spiritual oppression—praying "against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6:12). Pray that the enthronement ceremony will not happen and for an overwhelming outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Japanese people. Let's trust God to work in ways that far surpass the horizons of our imagination in this land of the Rising Son!



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Divine Appointment in a Barber Shop

BY AN ALLIANCE INTERNATIONAL WORKER
SERVING IN EUROPE

Recently, I was getting a haircut at a North African barbershop. I often witness to the two barbers who work there, Ali* and Khalil. They were both present that day, along with a client, Hassan. I chatted with Ali as he started cutting my hair while Khalil and Hassan listened.

Several minutes into the conversation, Ali turned to Hassan and said, “Come close and listen. This guy is a Christian and has some good stuff to say about life and religion. You can feel comfortable talking to him.”

This segued into some good conversations about the differences between their religion and Christianity. I noticed that Hassan was very respectful, thoughtful, and eager to listen. Amazingly, he is from the same people group as a man I know who recently came to Christ.

Hassan and I exchanged numbers, finished our conversation with Ali, and hugged each other as we left. A few days later, I set up a time to introduce the new believer to Hassan. It was exciting to witness this young Christian passionately share with Hassan about the true meaning of being a follower of Jesus. Ask God to soften Hassan’s heart and draw him to Himself.

*Names changed

The Believer’s Birthright

ADAPTED FROM THE BOOK *THE AUTHORITY OF THE BELIEVER*, BY JOHN MACMILLAN, ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN *THE ALLIANCE WEEKLY* (NOW *ALLIANCE LIFE*)

There are few subjects relating to the Christian life about which there is so little knowledge as the authority of the believer. Probably because of the extreme importance of a correct understanding of the Christian’s privileges and responsibilities—and because of the power which they confer on a militant believer—the enemy has specially sought to hold back this knowledge from God’s people. The believer who is fully conscious of his own authority can face the enemy without fear or hesitation. Behind the “authority” possessed by the believer is a “Power” infinitely greater than that which backs his enemies—and which they are compelled to recognize.

This authority is the birthright of every born-again child of God because of his elevation with Christ to the right hand of the Father. The believer has become an occupant of the Lord’s Throne, with all that it implies of privilege and responsibility. We are made to sit with Christ “in the heavenlies.” His people, therefore, occupy “with Him” the same august position. We do not [ascend to it] by any act of faith or devotion on our part. It is ours simply to recognize the fact of this position and to take our place in humble acceptance, giving all the glory and honor to God.

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Thank you for praying for Alliance workers and for the people with whom they share the gospel. To receive *The Alliance Call to Prayer* and weekly Alliance Prayer Requests via email, subscribe at www.cmalliance.org/pray. Alliance ministries are supported by gifts to the Great Commission Fund and the CAMA Advance Fund.

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