



# Japan Journal

| DECEMBER 17, 2012

Updating You on the Benekes' Outreach to Students in Kobe!

Dear Friends,

Merry Christmas! Since this is our first year celebrating in Japan together, Jungshin and I recently set out to find some Christmas decorations for our apartment. We found a fake tree, a wreath, and some poinsettias easily enough. But what we *really* wanted was a nativity set. So because our local mall is supposedly the largest in Western Japan, we thought we would start by looking there.

Inside the entrance, we were greeted by a beautifully decorated, two-story Christmas tree. Red felt, green leaves, and white lights were everywhere. Most stores prominently featured Christmas products in their shop windows. **But after hours of searching, we came to a disappointing conclusion—there was nothing in the entire mall to even suggest that Christmas was a Christian holiday.**

In all the stores we visited, with all of their Christmas products, we didn't find so much as a greeting card that said anything about Jesus. We left the mall that day with heavy hearts. It was a poignant reminder of Japan's spiritual poverty, even in the midst of its great material wealth.

**However, for Christians here, there is truly no better time to share Christ than during this season that bears his Name.** Because of Christmas, we have had dozens of opportunities for gospel conversations on campus this month. Students are more open than ever to hearing about who Jesus is and why we celebrate his birth. Please pray that many Japanese might join us in worshipping Him for the first time this Christmas. May God bless you and yours!

Season's Greetings,

*Ryan & Jungshin*



Sitting on the floor at home with our tree and nativity set. Merry Christmas!



At "Luminarie," a yearly holiday event in downtown Kobe that commemorates those who died in the 1995 earthquake

## **PRAISES & PRAYERS**

- Praise God for daily chances to talk about Christ this Christmas season!
- Pray for outreach events on 12/21~24: parties, caroling, candlelight service
- Pray that many Japanese might come to know Jesus Christ this Christmas

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