

Meri- Kurisumasu...



Jingle bell rockin' in our new pad

...and a Happy New Year! It has been a while since I wrote you last, but hopefully this photo was worth your wait. People still mention the Santa Klaus picture I took here way back in 2004, so I thought I should send an updated version. May it brighten your February.

Though Christmas has already come and gone, I wanted to share a little with you about how I spent the season. In Japan, Christmas is a dating holiday, not a time to spend with friends and family remembering Jesus' birth. In fact, many Japanese people do not even know what Christmas celebrates. One man told me he saw a store display with Santa on a cross!

Still, many Japanese are interested in learning the real "reason for the season," or at least how we

celebrate Christmas in a "Christian" country like America. It provides us a lot of natural opportunities to share the gospel. A Christian teacher, for example, asked us to talk to her English classes about the meaning of Christmas. Then, she let us pass out gospel CDs and invite all her students to an outreach event!

A Christmas Story

About 70 students came to our Christmas party, which included a 15-minute gospel message. One in particular was a guy named *Takashi*, who I met the week before on campus.

Takashi was the first person I had a chance to share the gospel with after I came back to Japan, so it was very encouraging for me to see him there. After that, he also came to our follow-up Christmas concert the next week, and he spent a lot of time with a short-term Korean mission team that visited in January (below). Please pray for his salvation.



Takashi (L) with Korean friends

Deck the Halls

Two months have passed since I came to Osaka, but I am still adjusting a little more each day. We moved into our apartment (notice the new address) before Christmas, and since then have slowly been gathering the things we need to make it a home. I finished my bedroom and was finally able to unpack everything last week. It feels really good not to be living out of suitcases anymore.

Also, I found a couple of good language schools to start attending last month. My teachers are great, and I can already see progress. It has been humbling to realize how much I still don't know, and challenging to make time for homework in my schedule. But through it all, I know God is refining me and building a foundation for long-term effectiveness.

Thanks again for your prayers and support, which make life here possible. Have a great month!

Prayer Requests

- Opportunities to share Christ with my Japanese teachers
- To manage my time well as I continue adjusting to Japan
- Upcoming events
 - Ski Camp (2.12-15)
 - Korean Vision Trip (2.19-26)

Ryan