

# SURPRISE Package

By Craig Lofgreen

While I was on my mission in Taiwan, one Christmas I was feeling a little discouraged. I knew that Christmas should be about remembering the Savior and sharing the gospel, but I was looking forward to getting a package from home and going to the annual mission Christmas Eve celebration to help bring some Christmas cheer into my life. Although the other missionaries in my apartment had already received large packages, by Christmas Eve I still had not received anything.

I was feeling pretty miserable as my companion and I rode our bikes through pouring rain to the mission office to meet up for the celebration. I hoped that a package would be waiting for me, but when we arrived, not only were there no packages, but there were also no missionaries. We were late enough that the other missionaries had already left for the party. I don't believe I'd ever felt so empty, so depressed, and so utterly alone. It did not feel like Christmas.

Sitting in the dark, all I could think about was how lonely and miserable I felt. Tears started to fall.

Then I heard the familiar sound of a motorcycle outside.



*I hadn't received a Christmas package from my family, but what I did receive became one of my most memorable Christmas gifts.*

It was the evening mail delivery. I looked out and saw the mailman carrying a package to the mission office.

To my surprise, the package was addressed to me. It was from the young women of my home ward. Inside I found the most wonderful, crushed, delicious, three-week-old chocolate chip cookies I'd ever tasted! They were like manna from heaven. My companion and I ate them together, with smiles on our faces and a little more of the Christmas spirit in our hearts.

The young women who put together that package probably had no idea how much it would lift the spirits of a discouraged missionary clear across the Pacific Ocean. The true meaning of Christmas focuses on our Savior, and the Christmas gift from those young women served as a gentle reminder to me that God is aware of our simple struggles. I have since learned even more that there's much more to Christmas than merely receiving gifts. But to this day, that simple package has been one of the most meaningful Christmas gifts I have received, and it's one I will never forget. **NE**

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