

THIS IS ONEIDA THOUGHTS FROM A VOLUNTEER, part 1

Some of us were in that place last week and, yes, it was just as described. Seeing those hills and mountains inspired eternal kinds of thought. There is repose there, and there is hope because it sure appears that the eternal God abides and works at that place we visited. That place has a name - Oneida Baptist Institute. While that place is internationally known, to a great many people it is a well-kept secret. Pity.

I said it was a place of repose and hope. It is. The week before we arrived, there was a beating and shooting in "town," but a hundred yards away on the OBI campus, there was peace and calm. But tranquility is far from the only benefit kids find there.

Do you know what it does for youngsters sixth through twelfth grades?

To be immersed in respect and discipline and love and encouragement?

To be taught to be responsible and to have clear guidelines regarding how to conduct oneself and how to relate appropriately to others?

To have "I love you," "You're forgiven," "I'll help you," "Try again," "Great job," "Here's how" modeled for you by adults who care about you even when you mess up, because those adults were called and placed there by God for His purposes?

To be introduced to or reacquainted with the Lord of those hills from whence their help comes and not only introduced to Him, but discipled in His ways and His purposes?

To know they can trust Him because they've learned in that place to trust authority figures?

To learn that the Lord of that place, in those hills, is also the Lord of deserts and plains, of mountains and forests, of oceans and skies and galaxies, so that wherever they go – and they'll go everywhere – He's already there?

To have adults know and understand that kids need all the things previously mentioned, and that they need outlets for energy and expression so all kinds of sports and arts and activities are made available (even though they operate on a shoestring financially) so they can enjoy and excel in those ways, too?

To know that somebody cares so much that you are doing your best in your studies that they'll teach you today and help you tonight in study hall – maybe two study halls?

To know that if you start falling behind in your class work – or come in behind – you aren't in educational free-fall; the Learning Center will help you catch up?

You probably already know what all these things do for young people, but here's what I think -- it fills them with hope.



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