

THIS IS ONEIDA INTERNATIONAL BAZAAR

I am told that a switch flips and we begin to fall apart at 40 years of age. I recently tried to hang onto the last few days in my 30's because I just turned 40. As I grow older, I find myself appreciating things that I did not necessarily appreciate as a youngster. As an Oneida student, I had the privilege of being surrounded by students from all over the country and all over the world. Imagine that – a kid from Oneida, Kentucky sitting in the classroom next to a kid from New York, Asia, or South America. Even as a kid, I had at least some small appreciation for classmates from all over the world. One of my best friends in middle school was from the Philippines, and one of my best friends in high school was from Colombia. This Colombian friend is still one of the very best friends I have ever had.

We currently have 50 international students from 24 different nations, and one of our annual campus events is the International Bazaar. During this designated week, our international students take turns sharing in chapel each day about their native lands and customs. At the end of the week, the international students are hosted in the homes of our staff to cook some of their favorite foods. On Saturday evening, our school family gathers in the gymnasium to sample the food. It is a great night of eating and fellowship, but I must admit the foods I sample are sometimes a tad bit hotter than I can handle. Cold water is typically in high demand during this event.

It still amazes me that the world comes to this little place. Guests on our campus often ask how kids from the other side of the world decide to come to Oneida. The answer is very simple. The Lord makes it happen. Oneida really is a mission field, but what we frequently fail to recognize is the fact that these international kids often return to their home countries after finishing their education. Our hope is that they will take Jesus back with them to wherever home might be.

We share the love of Jesus with these kids, and one of the ways we do this is through daily chapel services. Imagine speaking in chapel to kids from 25 states and 24 nations. If you are a pastor, we'd love to have you in to do chapel and would love for you to bring some church members with you. If you are a church member, tell your pastor that Oneida wants him to come speak and then come along with him. We'll even feed you lunch, but we'll go easy on the spices.



**Larry A. Gritton, Jr.
OBI President**

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