

THIS IS ONEIDA “WILLING TO DO GOD’S WILL” Part 1



The salutatorian for OBI’s Class of 2013 was Rebekah Roughton, the 18-year-old daughter of two of our ministry team members. Although Rebekah and her family joined us only at the beginning of her senior year (a difficult time of transition for almost any student and, in particular, for Rebekah, after having spent the previous 12 or more years in the same school in North Carolina), she was one of the most active of all our students, participating wholeheartedly in drama, vocal and instrumental music, art, cheerleading, Student Council, Creative Ministries, and Baptist Campus Ministry (BCM). She plans to attend Word of Life Bible Institute in Florida.

In her “Oneida Experience” essay she wrote: “My school day and all the activities afterwards have all been blessings to me, and I can see in all of them that this was God’s purpose of my last year of high school. The single most important lesson I have learned by coming to Oneida is that being willing to do God’s will – no matter how difficult – while keeping an open heart and mind to His plan and being receptive to Him, will open doors and create opportunities that you would never have imagined; God does indeed know what is best for me. I have learned to give up what I wanted and to do what He wanted have grown closer to Him as my leader, master, friend, and Father. I love Him and He has shown me His love this year in more ways than one, and I am very thankful to Him for sending me here. I know it was the right thing to do and it has taught me so much and helped me in several ways.”

As is the normal custom, our salutatorian was among those members of the graduating class who were given the opportunity to address the congregation during the graduation service. What follows below and continues next week is an extended excerpt from Rebekah’s salutatory address.

“My oldest brother, Stephen, is now 26 and a missionary in Mexico Last summer I visited Stephen for six weeks. I saw how other people live: their culture and lifestyle. The one thing I will always remember is their smiles and love. One day I sat down and prayed for a long time. I cried when I talked about children and how they need love and the orphans who are neglected. I dedicated my hands to the Lord. I told Him that I want my hands to be His hands.

“If we are a Christian, we are God’s vessels, His instruments; He lives in us and through us. Our body becomes Christ’s body and we are one with Him. Our hands are one of the main tools He uses to do His will. Out of all the parts of our bodies, our hands are working the most. Our feet are also very important, for they take us places. God wants our hands and feet to go where He wants us to go and do what He wants us to do there. Both are vitally important, but we need to dedicate our whole bodies to Christ. Give your hands to Christ and tell Him that He can use them as He pleases wherever He wants us to be.”

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