



A Perspectives Follow Up:

THE Journey Deepens

Lindsay Goodier

Future missionaries created lifelong connections and were empowered for missionary service at "The Journey Deepens" retreat February 28-March 2, 2003 in Oklahoma. This gathering of 70 students and professionals from five states also included 16 missionaries from multiple agencies who helped the prospective missionaries develop concrete steps

through teaching, question-and-answer sessions, and one-on-one interaction.

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For many, "The Journey Deepens" confirmed the missionary call God has given them. "This weekend

gave me a clearer vision for what I would like to do and how I can get there," said Abbey Murphy, a high school senior. "It brought missionaries into my life to help me along the journey in many ways." Jared Vedros, a university student in the *Perspectives* Study Program, added, "This helped solidify things about my future and expanded what I know about missions. I loved being able to talk with the missionaries who are doing what I dream of doing."

Anita Wood and her husband Billy came from an Arkansas *Perspectives* class knowing that God had called them to Asia, but not sure if they were ready to go. "The Journey Deepens" proved to be a turning

point in their lives. "This weekend has shown us what we lack. We will be moving forward in faith that God will work in us to build the character we need and equip us with the tools that are necessary," said Anita.

Steve Halley, National Director of the *Perspectives* Study Program, views the weekend as a connection point for future long-term missionaries. "The intent of this gathering is to help people take the next step. It's specifically designed for people who already have a vision for the world." Halley has attended numerous mission conferences and conventions, and he is convinced that "The Journey Deepens" has what future missionaries need: support, encouragement, and accountability. "We don't need more options; we need to sit down and plan our next steps," Halley notes.

"It's a great way to understand more of what it takes to be a missionary and a great way to meet other people and make connections," said Laura Fritz of Caleb Project. In addition to Caleb Project and the *Perspectives* Study Program, other national co-sponsors include Advancing Churches in Missions Commitment (ACMC) and the U.S. Center for World Mission.

"Being able to ask missionaries question after question helped many," says Dave Leggett, president of the retreat sponsor, MissionsFocus International. "This really helped make going to the mission field seem closer and not so huge and complicated."

In future years "The Journey Deepens" will be held in different parts of the U.S., reports John McVay, Executive Director of MissionsFocus International. Are you interested in possibly participating in "The Journey Deepens"?

Indicate your interest at www.TheJourneyDeepens.com, and you'll be notified of future dates and locations. The next retreat is slated for April 2-4, 2004 in Davis, Oklahoma. 🌐

