China is Newest Addition to EMU Cross-Cultural Program

By Paul Yoder
Staff Writer

Thanks to the China Education Exchange’s (CEE) work, Goshen and EMU are already the most well known places outside of China within one Chinese province; a province with a population of 120 million.

Herm Weaver and Myrrl Byler have been friends for a long time" after growing up in the same Ohio town. What brings them together now is their plan to lead EMU students on a Cross-Cultural trip in May 2004.

Byler is the Mennonite expert on China, according to Weaver.

"I don’t have a lot of competition," Byler said.

Byler has been the director of CEE since 1990 and also has been "working with China since 1987." CEE is linked with MCC and four main Mennonite Mission Boards.

The China Cross-Cultural is scheduled for May 6 - 27, 2004. The three-week program will include a half-dozen cities and some time in the countryside.

"We envision going in at Beijing, flopping around to a couple cities, and then exiting at Hong Kong," Weaver summarized. "I think there will be tremendous learning opportunities."

"We want to experience the difference between rural and urban China," Byler said. The time spent at universities will include study of China’s past, present, and culture. CEE works closely with these schools. Students will also be involved with Chinese students in conversation.

"There will be contact with churches in Manchu," Byler said. "We’ll go to churches of two or three thousand," Byler commented, elaborating on Byler’s comment. "What I’m looking for is that students would begin to understand that there’s a whole other world.

He explained that many students see opportunities in countries like Nicaragua as places for service or international business. His idea is to open up similar awareness about China and East Asia.

Weaver identified another way this trip will be unique for them. "[It’s] the place and the opportunity to interact with Myrrl [Byler]. We’re not going to China as a country of the future," Byler said. "You don’t mind," Weaver replied.

"If people are interested in going they should surely come to this meeting. Have people contact Herm [Weaver] by phone or e-mail if they’re coming to the meeting or would like to be on a list if they can’t be there," he added.

"Oh, and there will be homemade desserts," Weaver said, grinning again. "That accounts for the request RSVP."

And as always, SIFE will continue to work with people locally and internationally in order to "better their knowledge of basic skills and to help them out in any way possible," Musselman said.

For more information on SIFE at EMU, visit www.emu.edu/clubs/sife.