

## Hosts and Organizers for MennoJerusalem's tour program

### CHINA: *Descendants of the Dragon*

October 5-24, 2012\*



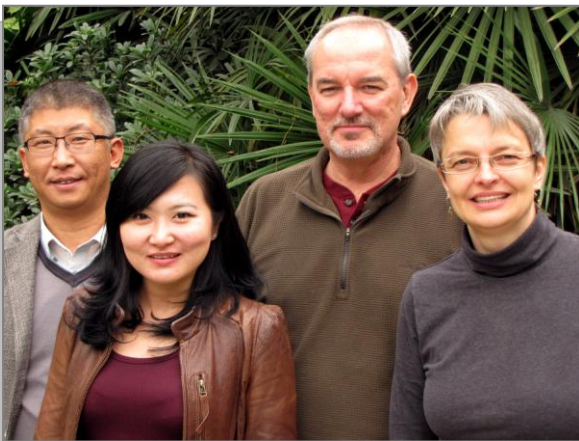
**GLENN EDWARD WITMER** designs and organizes tours especially for North Americans who want more than typical commercial tourist programs. Instead, we add to the usual tourist sites and country highlights numerous opportunities for deeper levels of understanding of the people, their way of life and activities day-by-day, their history, culture, religious beliefs and practices. We also provide as many opportunities as possible to meet people in person and to engage them in conversation. With the addition this year of our new series, *Ancient Cultures, Timeless Faiths*, we are proud to offer this special touring insight into one of the most important and fascinating ancient and modern societies of history, the Middle Kingdom, with its 5000 years of history, characterized by the symbol of the fortune-providing and all-powerful dragon. (*Shanghai photo on the bund, June 2011*)

**MYRRL BYLER** lives in Harrisonburg, Virginia, when he isn't in China. He first went to the Middle Kingdom as an English teacher in 1987. Since 1990 he has served as the director of Mennonite Partners in China (MPC). Myrri has a background in education and theology, has led numerous learning tours, and arranged cross-cultural experiences for university students. He also hosts many Chinese delegations and groups in the US. Myrri can go on endlessly about what China used to be like in the "old days." Myrri will accompany the group in Beijing, Xi'an, and Shanghai.

**JEANETTE HANSON** and her husband have lived in China for twenty years. Few Westerners have had the variety of experiences and know the intricacies of life in China like Jeanette. As assistant director of MPC, Jeanette works with universities and foreign English teachers and nurtures a myriad of relationships with students, teachers, government officials, pastors, and farmers. Jeanette, Todd, and their two girls currently reside in Chengdu. She will lead the group program in Sichuan province.

**YIN HONGTAO (JONATHAN)** grew up in northeastern China but has lived most of his life in Beijing. He is a graduate of Nanjing Theological Seminary and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in Indiana. Currently he works with MPC in Beijing as a liaison to Chinese churches, and helps with logistics of groups traveling through Beijing. He will travel with us to Xi'an as well.

**ZHANG XI (BETTY)** is a native of Chengdu and a graduate of Sichuan University. An English-language major, Zhang Xi works with MPC in a variety of roles, including assisting with these learning tours. She brings youth and energy to the program along with the skills needed to make things happen. That will be evident in her accompaniment and input especially for the Chengdu, Nanchong, and Guilin portions of the tours.



(l to r) Yin Hongtao, Zhang Xi, Myrri Byler, Jeanette Hanson

Our tour organizers make good use of the many friends, relationships, and partnerships that have been developed over a period of thirty years. Personal connections are the basis for engaging the people who live in China, and all learning tour participants benefit from these connections. Chinese educators, students, pastors and other friends will be available for you to interact with on a personal level, to enhance your understanding and personal experiences during the tour.

---

\*Final dates are subject to the release of the international airline schedules  
[www.mennojersalem.org](http://www.mennojersalem.org) ; [office@mennojersalem.org](mailto:office@mennojersalem.org) ; (519) 696-2884

continued...

~ A note from Glenn ~

My own experiences during another two months spent in China this past year, with Chinese tour companies, organizers, guides, and itineraries, made me determined not to inflict that kind of thing on MennoJerusalem participants: superficial ‘canned’ tour commentary and constant chatter, noisy fast-moving onto-the-bus-and-off-again jaunts to the next crowded stop, and almost no real contact with the Chinese people, let alone any discussions and understanding of who they are, what they think, and where they are going! It was all too “programmed” and impersonal—*touristy!*

My definite preference is always for easier schedule movement, meeting lots of local people, getting away from the fast-talking and pressuring commercial sites, and into several private settings, farms, villages, churches and schools, then also spending time with Chinese people with whom we can have conversations about their lives and dreams.

That's what we have done for our itinerary! Oh yes, of course the key tourist sites will not be missed: Beijing's Tiananmen Square and Forbidden City, the Great Wall and Terracotta warriors, the fast trains, pandas, Yangtze River cruise, and so on... But what we have added as second and third layers of site visits and activities are what make all the difference for a truly meaningful tour.

Please spend some time with the tour day-by-day itinerary, the page about the tour organizers and our special guides to see what I mean. This is what *MennoJerusalem* is all about: to inform, inspire, entertain, and challenge along the way...with life-changing experiences and memories, along with amazing photo opportunities!

We hope you will be able to join us.

*MennoJerusalem Programs Inc.*