



### 1. Is there any information available about the Yongtai County Christian Church?

Very little information was found about Yongtai County Christian Church beyond its location and appearance. The church is located on Tashan Road in Yongtai town. Maps of the location are provided at Figure 1 and Figure 2, and a photo of the church is provided at Figure 3. A Chinese language business directory was located stating that the church has eight staff members.<sup>1</sup>



Figure 1 Location of Yongtai County Christian Church<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> „Yongtai County Christian Church’ (永泰县基督教会), undated, Fuzhou Corporate, <http://fuzhou.11467.com/50997> – Accessed 2 March 2012

<sup>2</sup> „Location of Yongtai County Christian Church’, 2012, Google Maps, <http://g.co/maps/byceq> – Accessed 2 March 2012



Figure 2 Location of Yongtai County Christian Church (永泰县城关基督教堂位置图)<sup>3</sup>



Figure 3 Photo of Yongtai County Christian Church<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> „Location of Yongtai County Christian Church (永泰县城关基督教堂位置图)’ undated, Fuzhou Life IE City, <http://fuzhou.life.iecity.com/Detail66485052704853658868.html> – Accessed 2 March 2012

<sup>4</sup> „Photo of Yongtai County Christian Church’, 2012, Google Maps, <http://g.co/maps/stmvj> – Accessed 2 March 2012

**2. Are there any reports relating to the treatment of members of the local church in Yongtai County or reports about the treatment of members of the local church in Fujian more generally in 2011?**

No information was found regarding the treatment of local church members in Yongtai County, and no information was found about their treatment in Fujian in 2011.

**Yongtai**

No information was found regarding the treatment of local church members in Yongtai County, irrespective of the date.

One source was located that provides an estimate of the relative size of Yongtai's Christian community. Asia Harvest, a Christian organisation that works in China and other areas of Asia, lists Yongtai as having a total of 49,804 Protestants.<sup>5</sup> Over a third of the county's Protestants (17,787 people, equating to 35.71 per cent of Yongtai's Protestants) are not affiliated with registered Protestant churches.<sup>6</sup> The statistics have been collated by Asia Harvest from a variety of sources, most of which are Christian organisations and some of which are slightly dated.

**Fujian**

No information was found regarding the treatment of local church members in Fujian in 2011. RRT Country Advice CHN39091 (dated 24 August 2011) also retrieved no recent information regarding the treatment of local church members in Fujian.<sup>7</sup> The most recent information located was dated 2009 and is provided below. Further information about the local church can be found in the RRT Country Advice Local Church Background Paper.<sup>8</sup>

In a 2009 letter to the tribunals, Philip Yee, an elder of the local church in Melbourne, advised that arrests of local church members have become less common than in the past. He stated that:

[In some] provinces, including Fujian province, the local churches are regarded as illegal gatherings, however as we understand from some members who come from this province, there is not much arrests as before. There is now more dialogue between members of the local church and the authorities.<sup>9</sup>

The 2009 US Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC) Annual Report notes that authorities target the local church:

Official reports from two localities in Fujian province in early 2009 indicate that the Local Church has been singled out as one of the targets that public security forces must „strike hard” against.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Fujian, undated, Asia Harvest, <http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/Christians%20in%20China/Provinces/Fujian.htm> – Accessed 1 March 2012

<sup>6</sup> Fujian, undated, Asia Harvest, <http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/Christians%20in%20China/Provinces/Fujian.htm> – Accessed 1 March 2012

<sup>7</sup> RRT Country Advice 2011, *Country Advice CHN39091*, 24 August

<sup>8</sup> RRT Country Advice 2012, *Background paper: China – The Local Church*, March

<sup>9</sup> Yee, P. 2009, Email to RRT Research & Information: „Re: Request for information from the Refugee Review Tribunal, Sydney”, 9 February

<sup>10</sup> US Congressional-Executive Commission on China 2009, *Annual Report 2009*, 10 October, p.139

## Availability of information

Two sources noted that while there is a lack of reporting about illegal Christian organisations in general in Fujian, this did not equate to there being a lack of incidents, though these sources were not specifically referring to the local church, but rather to unregistered Protestant and Christian groups more broadly. In a 2010 telephone interview with the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Pastor Bob Fu, the President of the China Aid Association, stated that there were fewer incidents reported involving Christians in the east coast provinces of China, however he stated that „this did not necessarily mean there were fewer incidents, but rather that they were not reported’.<sup>11</sup> Pastor Fu also stated in a 2011 statement to the CECC that there was an increase in „intensity and scale of [the government’s] suppression of “unregistered” Catholic and Protestant churches’ since late 2010, though he concedes the persecution was not as severe as expected.<sup>12</sup> He offers four main reasons for the lack of severity: unregistered churches have become more cautious and secretive in their operations; those persecuted are not willing to report their persecution to the outside world for fear of harsher treatment; the government’s resources were diverted to containing the threat of a „Jasmine Revolution’; and the public reaction to the closing of an unregistered church in Beijing was so strong it has made local governments cautious about persecuting other unregistered churches.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Refugee Board of Canada 2010, CHN103500.E – *China: Situation of Protestants and treatment by authorities, particularly in Fujian and Guangdong (2005-May 2010)* , 30 June

<sup>12</sup> China Aid Association 2011, *Freedom of Religion and the Rule of Law in China in 2011*, <http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/112/fu110311.pdf> – Accessed 2 March 2012

<sup>13</sup> China Aid Association 2011, *Freedom of Religion and the Rule of Law in China in 2011*, <http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/112/fu110311.pdf> – Accessed 2 March 2012

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