

**Refugee Review Tribunal  
AUSTRALIA**

**RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE**

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**Questions**

**1. What is the overall situation for Christians in Shenyang.**

**RESPONSE**

**1. What is the overall situation for Christians in Shenyang?**

Information for this response has been provided on [Christians in Shenyang](#), [Catholics in Shenyang](#) and [Christians in Liaoning](#).

**Christians in Shenyang**

Limited recent information was found regarding the situation for Christians in Shenyang. A June 2008 Research Response provides information on Christians in Shenyang, including reports on the size of the Christian population and the number of Churches. The response also contains reports on the detention and mistreatment of Christians in Shenyang which are mainly reported to have occurred in late 2002 and early 2003. No additional reports on the mistreatment or detention of Christians in Shenyang were located in the sources consulted (RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response CHN33443*, 5 June – Attachment 1).

One additional report on underground Christians in Shenyang was located in the sources consulted. On 30 December 2007, *The Times-Picayune*, a New Orleans based paper, reported on an American pastor who conducted religious instruction classes with underground Christians in Shenyang. The pastor is cited as stating that “in China there is no freedom of speech or freedom of religion. The students all were determined to learn more about Christianity. It was more open than I expected and I felt no fear or intimidation anywhere we visited”. The following is an extract of the report:

In late November, Pastor Jerry Hobren of the Northshore Bible Church in Covington saw this firsthand when he teamed up with a former classmate to spend two weeks in China, serving as an instructor in an ongoing missionary ministry outreach. **His students were a group of lay leaders from local Christian underground congregations in Shenyang near the border of North Korea.**

Hobren said he found the students eager to learn and noted that they lacked resources many take for granted in the United States, such as books or the Internet, to gain information. **“In China there is no freedom of speech or freedom of religion. The students all were determined to learn more about Christianity. It was more open than I expected and I felt no fear or intimidation anywhere we visited.”**

Hobren added that he had learned that about two years ago, after a similar session in another part of the country, arrests had been made.

Caption: In late November, Pastor Jerry Hobren of Northshore Bible Church in Covington teamed up with a former classmate, Pastor Quentin Washispack, to spend two weeks in China serving as instructors as part of the ongoing missionary ministry outreach. Their students were a group of lay leaders from local Christian underground congregations in Shenyang near the border of North Korea. Pictured is Hobren standing at the Great Wall of China (Kell, K. 2007, ‘Ministry delivers Christian teachings to China; Local pastor helps underground groups’, *Times-Picayune*, 30 December – Attachment 2).

### **Catholics in Shenyang**

A Research Response dated 14 November 2008 provides information on the official and unofficial Catholic Church in Shenyang (RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response CHN34047*, 14 November – Attachment 3). Further information on the official Catholic Church in Shenyang is provided in question two of Research Response CHN33047, dated 12 March 2008 (RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response CHN33047*, 12 March – Attachment 4).

### **Christians in Liaoning**

The 2006 edition of *China’s Christian Millions* provides some general information on Christians in Liaoning province. The author, Tony Lambert, describes the “explosive” growth in the number of Christians in Liaoning since the Cultural Revolution. According to the publication there are “over 1400 registered churches and meeting points” and “many unregistered house churches” in Liaoning. Lambert also reports that approximately 20% of the Christian population in the province is of Korean origin. The publication provides the following information on Christianity in Liaoning:

Liaoning is also in the north-east. Its capital, Shenyang, is the largest city in the area and a centre of industry. In recent years the decay of State-controlled heavy industry has led to massive unemployment, as workers have been laid off. In 2002 the TSPM [Three Self Patriotic Movement<sup>1</sup>] stated that there were 600,000 Protestants meeting in over 1400 registered churches and meeting-points. There are also many unregistered house churches. As there were only 60,000 believers in 1965, on the eve of the Cultural Revolution, the registered church has seen explosive ten-fold growth in under forty years.

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<sup>1</sup> Tony Lambert in the 2006 edition of *China’s Christian Millions* describes the Three Self Patriotic Movement as “responsible for relaying Party religious policies to Christians at the local level, and reporting back to the Party” (Lambert, T. 2006, *China’s Christian Millions*, OMF Publishing, Monarch Books, London, 2nd ed., p.14 – Attachment 10).

I was told in 2000 that the total number of registered believers in Shenyang was 200,000 – compared to only 70,000 in 1996. In 2003 Kanping county reportedly had 10,000 Protestants. The city of Fushun, just east of Shenyang, has seen growth from about eighty people meeting when the first church was reopened in about 1980 to 8,000 Christians meeting in seventy churches and meeting points. However, they have only one authorised pastor. In the area of northern Liaoning there were only about 1,000 believers in 1948. By 1994 they had grown ten fold to 10,000 still mostly worshipping in the Presbyterian tradition which was strong in the north east.

Dandong is a strategic city on the North Korean border; in 1991 a Christian living there estimated there were 10,000 believers, mostly in house churches, as well as many Roman Catholics. According to the TPSM in 1993 there were at least 10,000 Korean Christians in Liaoning meeting in sixteen churches and over 100 registered meeting points. A year later, another TPSM report estimated 20 per cent of all the Christians in the province (then estimated at 140,000) were Koreans – or about 28,000. In 1993 there were twenty three Korean students at the North East Theological Seminary in Shenyang, of whom eleven were from Liaoning. The province also has about 80,000 Roman Catholics (Lambert, T. 2006, *China's Christian Millions*, OMF Publishing, Monarch Books, London, 2nd ed, pp. 261-262 – Attachment 5).

The May 2007 US Department of State (USDOS) *China Profile of Asylum Claims and Country Conditions* also reports on the presence of ethnic Koreans in Liaoning and states that Korean Protestant churches “operate openly in Liaoning province”:

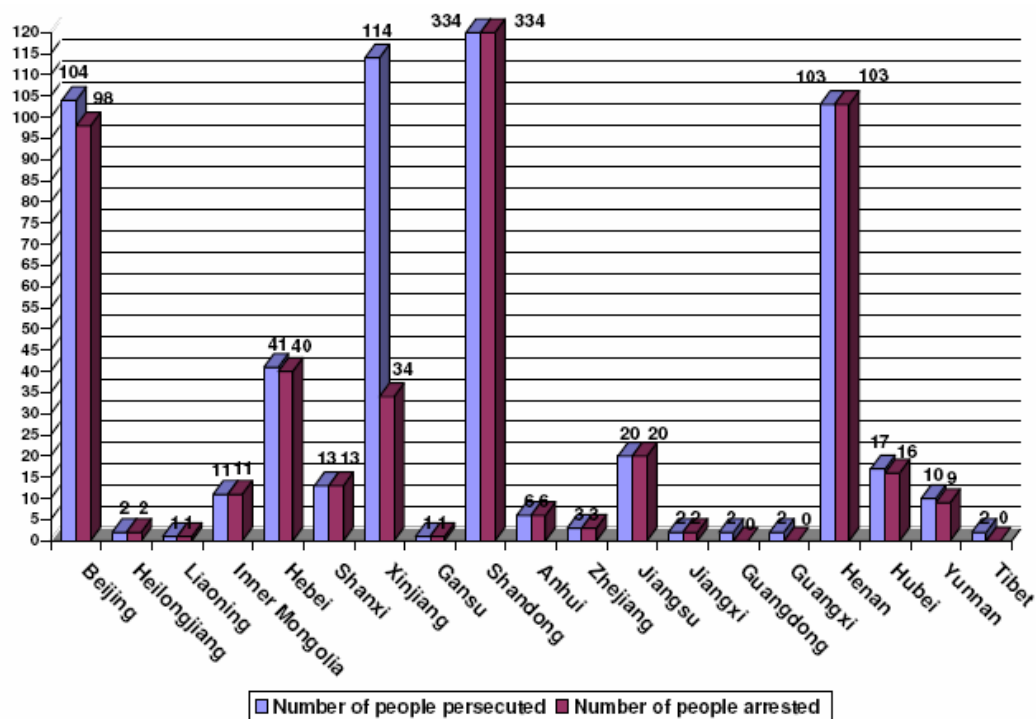
In established ethnic Korean communities in China's northeastern provinces of Jilin, Liaoning, and Heilongjiang, especially Jilin's Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, Korean language and culture co-exist with Chinese language and culture: protections for them are written into local law, signs are bilingual, ethnic Koreans operate their own Korean-language newspapers and radio stations, and ethnic Koreans work at various levels of local, city, and provincial government.

...In the Yanbian Autonomous Korean Prefecture, Catholic and Protestant churches, including Korean language Protestant churches with close ties to South Korean churches, have numerous adherents. **Korean Protestant churches also operate openly in Liaoning Province and maintain a seminary in Liaoning Province that trains ethnic Korean protestant ministers** (US Department of State 2007, *China Profile of Asylum Claims and Country Conditions*, May [http://www.pards.org/paccc/china\\_may\\_2007.doc](http://www.pards.org/paccc/china_may_2007.doc) – Accessed 4 March 2009, Chapter 3, Section C.3 – Attachment 6).

The China Aid Association, a non-profit Christian organisation based in the United States, releases annual reports on the treatment of unregistered Christians in China. These annual reports contain a “list of known cases of persecution” for the relevant reporting year. The China Aid Associations annual reports for 2006 and 2008 do not list any known cases involving the mistreatment or arrest of Christians in Liaoning province (China Aid Association 2009, *Annual Report of Persecution by the Government on Christian House Churches within Mainland China: January 2008 – December 2008*, 31 January <http://chinaaid.org/pdf/final%20english%20-2008%20persecution%20report.pdf> – Accessed 4 March 2009 – Attachment 7; China Aid Association 2007, *Annual Report of Persecution of Chinese House Churches by Province: January 2006 – December 2006*, January [http://chinaaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/04/2006\\_persecution\\_report.pdf](http://chinaaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/04/2006_persecution_report.pdf) – Accessed 4 March 2009 – Attachment 8).

The China Aid Association's annual report for the 2007 period, lists one incident of mistreatment against a Christian in Liaoning. According to the report on 14 March 2007 Ms Guo Changrong was arrested for "preaching the Gospel to the village party secretary". Ms Changrong was reportedly sentenced to one year of education through labour (China Aid Association 2008, *Annual Report of Persecution by the Government on Christian House Churches within Mainland China: January 2007 – December 2007*, February, p.7 <http://chinaaid.org/pdf/2007%20persecution%20report/caa%202007%20annual%20persecution%20report%20english.pdf> – Accessed 4 March 2009 – Attachment 9).

The China Aid Associations report for 2007 also includes the following diagram of the "number of people persecuted and arrested in the various provinces and municipalities directly under the central government". According to the diagram in 2007 Liaoning had among the lowest number of Christians arrested in comparison to other provinces:



(China Aid Association 2008, *Annual Report of Persecution by the Government on Christian House Churches within Mainland China: January 2007 – December 2007*, February, p.21 <http://chinaaid.org/pdf/2007%20persecution%20report/caa%202007%20annual%20persecution%20report%20english.pdf> – Accessed 4 March 2009 – Attachment 9).

No other information was found regarding the situation for Christians in Liaoning province for the period of 2006 to 2009.

## List of Sources Consulted

### Internet Sources:

#### Christian Sources

Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) <http://www.aidtochurch.org/>  
 Amity News Service <http://www.amitynewsservice.org/index.php>  
 Asia News <http://www.asianews.it/>

Cardinal Kung Foundation <http://www.cardinalkungfoundation.org/>  
 China Aid Association [http://www.chinaaid.org/english\\_site/index.php](http://www.chinaaid.org/english_site/index.php)  
 Christian Solidarity Worldwide <http://www.csw.org.uk/>  
 Compass Direct News <http://www.compassdirect.org/>  
 Forum 18 <http://www.forum18.org/>  
 Holy Spirit Study Centre (HSSC) <http://www.hsstudyc.org.hk/>  
 International Christian Concern <http://www.persecution.org/suffering/index.php>  
 Prisoner Alert <http://www.prisoneralert.com/>  
 The Christian Post <http://www.christianpost.com/us/>  
 Union of Catholic Asian News <http://www.ucanews.com/>  
 United States Commission on International Religious Freedom  
[http://www.uscifr.gov/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1383&Itemid=1](http://www.uscifr.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1383&Itemid=1)  
 Voice of the Martyrs <http://www.persecution.net/china.htm>  
 Worldwide Religious News (WWRN) <http://www.wwrn.org/>  
 Worthy News <http://worthynews.com/>  
 Zenit News Agency <http://www.zenit.org/index.php?l=english>

#### Databases:

FACTIVA (news database)  
 BACIS (DIAC Country Information database)  
 REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)  
 ISYS (RRT Research & Information database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)  
 RRT Library Catalogue

#### **List of Attachments**

1. RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response CHN33443*, 5 June.
2. Kell, K. 2007, 'Ministry delivers Christian teachings to China; Local pastor helps underground groups', *Times-Picayune*, 30 December. (FACTIVA)
3. RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response CHN34047*, 14 November.
4. RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response CHN33047*, 12 March.
5. Lambert, T. 2006, *China's Christian Millions*, OMF Publishing, Monarch Books, London, 2nd ed, pp. 232-277.
6. US Department of State 2007, *China Profile of Asylum Claims and Country Conditions*, May [http://www.pards.org/paccc/china\\_may\\_2007.doc](http://www.pards.org/paccc/china_may_2007.doc) – Accessed 4 March 2009.
7. China Aid Association 2009, *Annual Report of Persecution by the Government on Christian House Churches within Mainland China: January 2008 – December 2008*, 31 January <http://chinaaid.org/pdf/final%20english%20-2008%20persecution%20report.pdf> – Accessed 4 March 2009.
8. China Aid Association 2007, *Annual Report of Persecution of Chinese House Churches by Province: January 2006 – December 2006*, January

[http://chinaaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/04/2006\\_persecution\\_report.pdf](http://chinaaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/04/2006_persecution_report.pdf) – Accessed 4 March 2009.

9. China Aid Association 2008, *Annual Report of Persecution by the Government on Christian House Churches within Mainland China: January 2007 – December 2007*, February  
<http://chinaaid.org/pdf/2007%20persecution%20report/caa%202007%20annual%20persecution%20report%20english.pdf> – Accessed 4 March 2009.
10. Lambert, T. 2006, *China's Christian Millions*, OMF Publishing, Monarch Books, London, 2nd ed, pp.12-15.