

# **Beyond the Preamble: searching for God in a secularising Europe**

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## **1. The Challenge of Europe**

The absence of any reference to God or the Christian faith in the Preamble of the European Constitution has caused an ongoing debate from before the point at which Europe's Churches manifestly failed to persuade European politicians to refer to Europe's Christian heritage. It may be an ambiguous heritage but the success of politicians at excluding reference to God highlighted the extent to which current European policy making takes place in a secular vacuum. The Constitution guarantees the Christian churches a permanent consultative role within the European institutions but even this fails to assure individual believers that European policy makers take sufficiently seriously the motivating ability of the Christian faith. This is strange given the most recent work of Jürgen Habermas, the German neo-Marxist philosopher who suggests, persuasively, that Europe may be seeing a 'return to the religious', and uses the term 'post-secular' to describe this latest phenomena in the career of religion within European history.

Yet, the fact remains that the complexity within Western Europe is reflected in the equally complex situations found in the post-Soviet societies of Central and Eastern Europe. Reflecting on this, the call for Papers at the 2004 ISSR Conference highlighted the barriers that remain to be bridged in the attempt to understanding religion at a pan-European level. The invitation for papers not only made reference to the diversity of religious experience across these countries but also pointed to the diversity of methodological approach to the study of religion.

The Slovakian National Census in 2001 revealed a 10% increase since 1991 in the number of people who self-describe as 'Christian' from 76 to 86%. Are we to understand the increase as a reversal of secularisation? To understand such phenomena carefully it is necessary to understand something of the immediate, post-Soviet, historical situation. In Hungary in 1956, with the relaxing of restrictions, many previously underground groups (the Scouts, Christian groups, etc.) emerged to draft letters requesting permission to start up new groups. Their letters are displayed in the House of Terror in Budapest. Many letter writers were rounded up and punished following the collapse of the Hungarian uprising. Asking Slovaks in 1991, only eighteen months to two years after the 'velvet revolution', to indicate religious affiliation was always likely to generate anxiety among a certain percentage of the population. Such stories, and others like it, contribute to the complexity of understanding the situation of religious belief and practice in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989.

There are also significant developments within Western Europe that require careful reflection by those with an interest in the Christian research and the study of religion. I mention merely two here. The first is the presence of large numbers of migrant and ethnic minority congregations and significant numbers of those from Muslim backgrounds undergoing Christian baptism. Perhaps more significant is the rising tide of scholarly voices being raised against the classical theory of secularisation. Its power to monopolize the manner in which religious discourse is framed in Western Europe is waning, as the sociological and philosophical consensus begins to break down.

I want to turn to a discussion of these shifting trends at the outset of this paper before I begin to take a more detailed look at the current situation in Europe with regards to the study of Christianity and other religions in Europe.

## **2. The ebb and flow of secularisation**

There can be little doubt that any serious student of contemporary European religiosity has to give an account of secularisation. The debate has raged for nearly fifty years. However, more recent contributors to the debate, including several former secularization theorists who have since recanted, offer evidence that the consensus surrounding classical forms of the secularization theory is beginning to break down. New possibilities and approaches to the questions raised by European religiosity and secularization are being suggested. Sociologists and theologians within Europe<sup>1</sup> and North America are enlivening the debate that has focused

on the inevitability of religious decline in modern societies. Sociological mantras learned during the heady days of the sixties and seventies are no longer felt to be adequate in this rapidly moving debate. Church and Christian leaders who wish to engage with contemporary European societies must do so with a greater awareness of the sacred and secular diversity that exists across Europe.

Equally, there can be little doubt that secularism and secularisation continue to provide significant numbers of the citizens of Europe with a framework for shaping ethical decisions, priorities, actions, worldview, 'beliefs', and their attitudes towards other individuals, social groups, and institutions, including the Church. Further, as Raymond Fung reminds us, "In talking about our secular neighbours, we are also talking about ourselves."<sup>2</sup> Within such a framework religion has little or no value in the public realm and is considered to be a purely private matter. As a result, the privatisation of religion has tended to accelerate the degree of nominal religiosity. Consequently church members demonstrate an attendant lack of spirituality accompanied by a widely reported suspicion on the part of the wider population towards the church as an institution. Churches are accused of exercising undue power and influence over individuals and society and promoting mission merely as a means of extending their influence. One thinks of the recent reaction to the statements by the Italian candidate for the European Commission, Rocco Buttiglione,

"I have the right to think that homosexuality is a sin, but this has no effect on politics, because in politics, the principle of nondiscrimination prevails, and the state has no right to stick its nose in these situations," Buttiglione said.<sup>3</sup>

How one responds to this statement is likely to reveal to what extent one feels Europe is, or should be, a continent of secularizing nations.

Despite the cautions suggested by the findings of the European Values Survey<sup>4</sup>, the trends across Europe should make sobering reading for leaders of the European Churches that are seen to have decreasing relevance to the everyday lives of Europe's citizens. However, as I have travelled I have begun to feel that a more nuanced understanding of secularisation and its impacts may be called for. In their work *Religion in Secularizing Europe*, summarising the findings of the European Values Surveys of 1980, 1990, and 1998 the report's editors write,

"Secularization has not proceeded at a similar pace all over Europe."<sup>5</sup>

For many citizens of Central and Eastern Europe, 'doubly secularised' may be a more appropriate description. For them, soviet atheistic materialism has been followed rapidly by a western, capitalistic form of materialism. The story of Gabor is instructive in this regard:

Gabor Kovacs is a bright, engaging and articulate Hungarian in his mid 30s.

He is English and German-speaking and learnt English in his spare time to enable him to improve his career prospects with the multi-national companies that have been relocating offices to Budapest over the last fifteen years or so. He has worked for various multi-national offices in Budapest over the last seven or eight years and although he recognises the economic advantage of working for the western multi-nationals, he is very aware of the social cost to the individual employees and feels this personally. He speaks of being a 'slave' of western multi-nationals and complains that the higher than average salary brings with it a higher than average set of expectations. He laments that he is unable to give more time to his family commitments. He complains that colleagues in London, Paris, or Frankfurt have high unrealistic expectations. He suspects that they sometimes tell him that his allotted tasks should only need eight hours in the working day when in fact they know that eleven are needed. His working day is typically eight to eleven hours long, a fact he resents.

He readily suggests that the Soviet education of his youth offered no religious education but reveals that he is very interested in religion as an alternative to capitalism's inhuman processes. He thinks that it might provide a way of achieving inner peace, harmony and a way

of dealing with stresses of modern life. He also wonders whether religion can provide an alternative ideological or value base.

He suggests that Hungary and other EU accession states are likely to pay a high social cost for entry into the EU and believes that many of the accession states are in the pockets of the larger Western nations. Perhaps somewhat ironically therefore, he aspires to a world citizen, or at least a European one (although he hesitates to tie this too closely to the European Union), and enjoys travelling. He is fearful of nationalisms and is fearful that such factors may be destabilising in the enlarged EU. He asks whether the EU knows what it is doing by inviting potentially unstable nations into enlarged membership.

His interest in religion extends particularly to eastern, esoteric, religions, including Buddhism. He readily admits that he has little time for the study and devotion required by most religions. His understanding of religion is fairly individualistic and he rarely talks of religious 'groups', 'communities', or even 'churches'.

My encounter with Gabor reveals, I believe, that there are Europeans who, though carrying the burden of double-secularisation, instinctively believe that religious belief may in some way provide a way towards deeper personal integration and possibly a way to resist the de-humanising tendencies of the western multi-nationals that have recently arrived in Central and Eastern Europe.

Metropolitan Daniel of Iași, Romania, argues persuasively that in the face of such a predicament,

“Secularization obliges the Church to renew its spiritual life, to become more responsible in the world, more sensitive to the presence of Christ in the “signs of the time”, in the social struggle for justice, freedom and human dignity; even to experience often the situation of being marginalized, in order to better understand those who are marginalized or forgotten in different societies. Secularization calls paradoxically for more holiness of life, for a deeper spirituality.”<sup>6</sup>

Resisting the de-humanising tendencies of the western institutions and corporations, in some instances, is given institutional expression. In countries such as Russia, for example, the Orthodox Church is widely seen as an important ally in resisting the inroads being made by less desirable elements of western individualism and secularization (although in some versions, this seems to give way to extreme ideological expressions). In such countries, perhaps ironically, where minority churches feel themselves disadvantaged by the dominance of a majority Church, the attraction of a secular State as the only apparent means of securing religious freedoms is difficult to resist.

Grace Davie has put the case well for an understanding of 'European exceptionalism' but she would be the first to admit that her analysis fails to give adequate account of the complex social and historical realities of Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>7</sup> Further work is needed in these areas to understand more precisely the interaction between Gospel and culture.

The increase in the reporting of forms of contemporary spiritualities in the UK, informed in part by the work of David Hay and Kate Hunt, contributes to the developing sense that all is not well with the classical understanding of secularization. Work currently underway in Britain, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden (and, I note from the papers presented to this meeting, possibly Ireland) is attempting to understand and learn how best to respond to those people with no formal religious affiliation but who describe themselves as 'spiritual'.

Attendances at the film 'Passion of Christ' suggest a significant level of popular interest in the person and story of Christ. I do not want to offer a theological or artistic evaluation of this film(!) but simply to draw attention to the appeal of the Gospel narrative and the corresponding failure on the part of the churches of Europe to engage its peoples with it. The churches continue to empty at an alarming rate across Europe and their attempts to mediate the Gospel narratives seem less convincing, less appealing, and more institutionally demanding than handing over

eight euros for a night at the movies. However, eight euros is obviously considered good value for the many within Europe who are constructing individualized ways of making sense of religious narrative, symbolism, and ritual.

I note from the report of the Council in the Netherlands that the tragic death of Theo van Gogh is a reminder of the power of religiosity to stimulate both a strong aversion (van Gogh's work) as well as strong sympathies (van Gogh's assailant). I also, however, note the absence of any mention of the launch of the new Dutch version of the Bible. I visited the Netherlands two days after its launch on the 27th October, 2004 but could not obtain a copy in the local bookstore in Amersfoort. They had already sold out.<sup>8</sup> As a part of the launch the Queen read Genesis 1:1-<sup>10</sup> on prime time national TV, featured in a five hour feature on the Bible. A friend, standing in line to buy his copy, asked other purchasers whether they would be reading it. The most common response was, 'No, I just wanted to own a copy!' A survey conducted at the same time revealed that only 33% of the Dutch population regards itself as Christian.

How the famously tolerant Dutch will handle questions of integration in their multi-religious society will doubtless continue to interest the rest of the Europe. In France, the banning of religious symbols in public schools is a timely reminder that secular public policy is not exercised consistently within Europe. In a perverse contrast with the French experience, Muslims who wish to own a passport in equally irreligious Denmark<sup>9</sup> are required, as loyal Danes, to carry an image of the crucified Christ on the inside front cover.

Moving on from the Dutch bookshop we visited a trendy clothes store and on entering were surprised to be greeted by a bleeding heart Jesus, a Madonna and Child, and a Crown of Thorns. Not as religious icons, but as style icons, borne on the sleeves, chests, and quilted padding, of jackets, t-shirts, and other items of clothing.<sup>10</sup> Religion may have lost its institutional power base but, in this instance, it has not disappeared, just been captured and subverted by the fashion houses, including G-SUS Industries. Are we to understand by this that the secular is being sacralised or can we interpret it as evidence of the unstoppable appetite of the secular spirit: a mutant form of secularization that is unafraid to invade the private sacred space, previously negotiated over several hundred years of Enlightenment history. The private domain of religion is, it seems, no longer territory respected by advocates of secularization. In essence, we can see this response to Christianity paralleled by the work of van Gogh and his response to Islam.

Finally, it might be suggested that a further complicating factor is likely to be the presence of increasing numbers of migrant and ethnic minority churches across Europe. Their forms of Christian faith are vibrant and vital, often charismatic, and require high levels of personal commitment from their members.<sup>11</sup> The interaction of such congregations with traditional forms of the western church, as well as civic authorities, political leaders, and local communities, will remain an area of relevance to the discussion of secularization over the coming years.

In short, we can say that a more careful understanding and account of secularization will need to take account of these European realities, before we too readily conclude that Europe's peoples are on an unstoppable journey towards religious anomie.

Halman and Riis again,

"All age groups show increasing levels of general religiosity when they get older, but as soon as institutional aspects are evaluated, all age groups show declining levels of religiosity. There is indeed an institutional crisis, but not necessarily a religious crisis'<sup>12</sup>

So, the challenge for our churches remains: to engage with both the sacred space and the secular space. How may we make sense of both the marketplace and the cathedral precinct? How may we speak the name of Jesus in both places, in worship and in witness, with equal relevance and conviction?

### **3. Searching for God – finding God?**

#### **3a. The European Values Survey**

The European Values Survey is probably the most comprehensive grounding for any attempt to begin detailed research at a national level.<sup>13</sup> The datasets for the 1981-1984, 1990-1993, 1999-2001 surveys are available via national social science data archives (the latter dataset is also available for purchase on CD ROM). To analyse changes in political and economic orientations, family values and religious norms, their impact on economic growth, political party strategies and the prospect for democratic institutions, the first comparative value surveys were started in 1981 under the leadership of Jan Kerkhofs and Ruud de Moor. They collected data on ten West European societies. These surveys earned so much attention that they were soon replicated in fourteen additional countries with Gordon Heald coordinating the fieldwork outside Europe. To facilitate cross-national research, the data for the World Values Surveys were integrated and documented by Ronald Inglehart.

The surveys pose questions about church attendance and religious beliefs and deploy a similar methodology to that used by Gordon Heald through the UK-based Opinion Research Business. His work has returned consistent figures (between 70-72%) for people who describe themselves as 'Christian', figures borne out by the UK Census 2001 when a religious question was included for the first time in nearly 150 years.

The response to the question, 'Do you believe in God?' ran from 97% in Poland to 39% in the Czech Republic. The contrasts within Europe sometimes appear to defy explanation. The former Czechoslovakia not only divided politically during the events of the 'Velvet revolution' but the divide remains in terms of religious belief. The percentage of those who describe themselves as 'christian' in Slovakia, between 84-86%, is over double that of its close neighbour. A similar contrast in Germany, between former East and West, has also been widely reported. The EVS is most helpful in deploying a common methodology for determining levels of church/mosque/temple attendance, belief in God, religious practice and religious affiliation.

[www.europeanvalues.nl](http://www.europeanvalues.nl)

#### **3b. The International Social Survey Programme (ISSP)**

One of the most comprehensive, continuous academic survey programmes is the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP). It combines the cross-national with a longitudinal time dimension by replicating particular question modules, ideally in five year intervals (see <http://www.issp.org/info.htm>). Since 1985 ISSP has grown rapidly and is now covering more than thirty countries around the world, including Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Russia and Slovenia. Topics of ISSP include Social Networks (1986), Social Inequality (1987, 1992), Family and Changing Gender Roles (1988, 1994), Work Orientations (1989, 1997), Religion (1991), Environment (1993). The official data archive of ISSP is the Zentralarchiv, which makes the integrated data sets available via the archival network [www.za.uni-koeln.de/data/en/issp/index.htm](http://www.za.uni-koeln.de/data/en/issp/index.htm)

#### **3c. A selection of other Information gatherers**

In addition to surveys such as the European (and World) Values Survey, there are a number of much smaller Christian organisations and institutes that are collecting and disseminating research data relating to the Christian faith and other religions. I add a list to illustrate the current challenges faced across Europe. There are some obvious omissions from the list (Spain, Germany, etc.) where partial or complete directories and datasets exist. However, for the greater majority I have yet to identify agencies working in the Christian, or religious, empirical research field. It might be the case that other researchers present at this conference are aware of others. In the greater majority of countries, statistical gathering is left in the hands of either the national Evangelical Alliance and/or the national Ecumenical Council. The State Churches are normally required to produce accurate statistics relating to baptism, membership, and communion attendance. Despite these efforts, the European Evangelical Alliance and its

related partner, Hope for Europe, as well as the Conference of European Churches recognise this lack of, and need for, coherent data collection across Europe.

The value of such data collection is demonstrated by the frequency with which the work of UK-based Christian Research is cited by sociologists and scholars who study religion in the UK. Such data can inform our own perception of the claims of secularists, counter-secularists, and shades of opinion in between. National data relating to religiosity and Christianity collected by Denominational, national Christian, academic, and other 'study of religion' research agencies, naturally reflects the interests of the particular parties. Consequently there is no common methodology, no agreed matrix by which to survey respondents, no variables that command wide consensus. Additionally there are issues of language and culture to consider. The work of MARC Europe during the 1980s was pioneering in this regard. It's worth noting as a point of historical interest that one of the Danish Editors (O. Riis) of the MARC Europe report on Denmark should subsequently go on to co-edit Religion in Secularizing Society, a major report on the 1999-2001 European Values Survey.

Albania	The Evangelical Alliance has published a 2003 report on Evangelical Churches in Albania.
Finland:	The Church Research Institute, Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church is currently researching: Current research topics include: Four-year-report of church activities, Finnish religiosity, Spirituality of parish workers, Work among Finnish Migrants, Research on Partnership Parishes. <a href="http://www.evl.fi/kkh/ktk/english/index.htm">http://www.evl.fi/kkh/ktk/english/index.htm</a>
Norway	KIFO was originally expected to conduct church-focussed research but it has become more focussed on sociology of religion. Lutheran. <a href="http://www.kifo.no">www.kifo.no</a>  DAWN Norge has a very useful report on Norway.  The Egede Institute is a mission-focussed research institute that has been under-resourced since the early 1970s. Largely Lutheran <a href="http://www.egede.no">www.egede.no</a>  Peter Stiftelson Foundation. Plays a research role and currently co-operating with the University of Uppsala on the Missional Church programme of the Church of Norway. Also researching New Spirituality. <a href="http://www.peterstiftelson.no">www.peterstiftelson.no</a>
Russia	PIMENS is engaged in the study of religions and Christian traditions. It is an 'open' Orthodox institute based in St. Petersburg. Has also worked on New Religious Movements in Russia.
Slovakia:	SEN provides in depth study papers written for Christian observers of post-Soviet Central and Eastern Europe. Evangelical. <a href="http://www.citygate.org">www.citygate.org</a>
UK	Christian Research's ongoing mission must be set against the demise of the British Church Growth Association, Administry, and Churches Information for Mission. <a href="http://www.christian-research.org.uk">www.christian-research.org.uk</a>
Ukraine	The research Centre of Ukraine publishes Realis with a staff of twelve researching contemporary issues in the Ukraine from a Christian perspective. <a href="http://www.realis.org">www.realis.org</a>

#### **4. Georgian statistical and mission-related information**

This section is included to illustrate, as a 'case study' the particular issues facing the Christian, or religious, researcher.

Collecting Church statistics and other mission-related information is problematic in Georgia. The non-Orthodox Churches find that in practice their right to erect places of worship is severely restricted by the manner in which local authorities 'interpret' the legal regulations. In practice it would be nearly impossible for any non-Orthodox congregation to erect a place of

worship without the consent of the Patriarchate. Even for those Churches that enjoy reasonably good relationships with the Patriarchate the erection of places of worship is not at all easy. For example, the Baptist Church of Georgia has only been able to establish new congregations by means of using private homes for worship. Roman Catholics face similar issues and there are Pentecostal congregations that continue to meet in the forests around Tbilisi during the summer months. As a consequence it is not easy to arrive at an accurate assessment of the strength of the various Churches. Not unsurprisingly the public profile of local Churches can be rather low key and more than one congregation (representing different denominations) may meet in a place of worship built prior to the introduction of current building restrictions.

A further complicating factor, present elsewhere of course, is the tendency for even apparently monolithic groups to splinter. Protestant researchers, for example, seem to find the complexity of Orthodoxy a challenge. Sometimes even the most reliable guides fail to comprehend the diversity that exists. A visit to Georgia for five days during August 2004 provided some opportunity to meet with leaders of the respective churches and denominations and gain some impressions and data relating to Georgian Christianity and other religions.

#### **4a. Complexities within the Christian Community**

##### **i. The Eastern Orthodox Churches**

Within Georgia, Divine Liturgy is celebrated by three Eastern Orthodox traditions. The largest is the auto-cephalic Orthodox Church of Georgia (the 'official' Orthodox Church). Additionally there are Russian Orthodox and Ukrainian Orthodox congregations, made up of (dwindling numbers of) ethnic Russians and Ukrainians living in Georgia. The Orthodox in the Ukraine are deeply divided into a number of competing jurisdictions (though we will not consider those here).

There are also several dissenting Orthodox groups who normally self-style as 'Orthodox traditionalists'. Most are conservative and are trying to revive an earlier, more traditional form of Orthodox practice. The most widely known groups are the Old Believers (syn. Old Ritualists), divided into two groups. The smaller group of Old Believers are the Popovtsy (syn. Novozybkov) who recognise the authority and role of Priests and Bishops over their congregations. The larger group are the Bezpopovtsy who, as their Russian name suggests, reject the authority and role of Priests and Bishops. The Christian Orthodox Church in Georgia (syn. The True Orthodox Church) claims its apostolicity through a Metropolitan Bishop in Boston, USA and believe themselves to be the only faithful Orthodox remnant in Georgia, in opposition to the 'heretical' Georgian Orthodox Church led by Patriarch Ilia II.. There are smaller groups, including the Gldani Orthodox Eparchy, the Dukhoboriy Orthodox and the Malakani Storoveryi.

##### **ii. The Oriental Churches**

The Armenian Apostolic Church has existed in Georgia for many centuries. The Bishop resides in Armenia and is represented in Georgia by a Vicar General. The Oriental Churches are distinct from the Eastern Orthodox Churches in that they reject the Chalcedonian Ecumenical Council and its Christological formulations.

##### **iii. The Roman Catholic Churches**

The Roman Catholic Bishop resident in Tbilisi is responsible for the care of three distinct groups of Roman Catholic Churches. The group with which most Western observers will be familiar are those congregations that use the Latin-rite. There are also Roman Catholic congregations from the Eastern Catholic tradition that are Eastern in their liturgy but recognise the primacy of the Bishop of Rome (the Pope). These are the Chaldean-rite (syn. Syrian, or

Assyrian, Orthodox) and Armenian-rite congregations (NOT the same as the Armenian Apostolic Church]).

#### iv. The Protestant Churches

The majority of Baptist congregations belong to the Evangelical Baptist Church of Georgia. There is also a smaller group of Baptists, the Association of Christian-Baptist Churches. Other 'non-registered', independent Baptist churches exist. The latter two groups of Baptists tend to be ethnically Russian.

The largest group of Pentecostals belong to the Pentecostal Union though again there are significant numbers of independent Pentecostal and other charismatic fellowships.

#### **4b. Ethnic and geographical factors**

The disputed regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia reflect ethnic questions that have an ecclesial corollary. Georgian Orthodox Churches in Abkhazia, for example, are generally led by Russian Priests from Russia. The Georgian clergy, including the Metropolitan, are not permitted to enter the region. Many Georgian Orthodox cross into Georgian territory to attend divine liturgy in the Georgian language.

An aspect of the civil and political changes over the last ten years has been the gradual emigration of ethnic Russians and Ukrainians along with their concentration in the self-proclaimed independent regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. After 1992 these regions are not generally included in the Georgian Census data. This suggests the need for a more careful assessment of the respective sizes of the Russian Orthodox Churches and those churches that traditionally attract ethnic Russians (including the Pentecostal and independent Baptist churches).

However, despite these complicating factors, the simple expediency of visiting the region leads one to conclude that the various sources of statistical and mission-related information available globally have not always reflected the realities of Church life in the region. It has to be said that many of these sources of information about Georgia are either out-of-date, reflect inaccurate statistical assumptions, or appears to be little more than guessing!

If the Churches of Europe are to gain a better understanding of their relative strengths and weaknesses, of their social contexts, and of the missionary challenges they face, it is essential that Europeans are involved in gathering research information and reflecting upon it in partnership with others. It is not sufficient for mission research agencies located elsewhere in the world to offer data that may be inaccurate or misleading. Such efforts do not best serve the Churches already located in the regions nor global mission Agencies and their strategies.

## 5. Georgian Directory of information

State Department for Statistics of Georgia

4, K. Gamsakhurdai Avenue,

Tbilisi, Georgia.

[info@statistics.gov.ge](mailto:info@statistics.gov.ge)

[www.statistics.ge/index\\_eng.htm](http://www.statistics.ge/index_eng.htm)

Their website provides full statistical information about Georgia in English. Particularly useful is the comprehensive site for the 2002 Population Census and other reports from the State Department for Statistics of Georgia (including the *Social Trends 2004* report).

The Christian Study Circle in Tbilisi collects Church-related statistics annually and makes available a brief Directory for the Churches in Georgia.

Forum 18 provides occasional information about churches present in Georgia in its reporting on human rights and religious freedoms issues in Georgia.

[www.forum18.org](http://www.forum18.org)

### 5a. DIRECTORY

Church Name	Leader	Address details	Congregations	Priests / Pastors	Other information
<b>Eastern Orthodox Churches</b>					
Orthodox Church of Georgia	Catholicos Ilia II				65% of the Georgian population
Russian Orthodox Church		St. Alexander Nevski 69, Iv. Javakhishvili str., Tbilisi	Tbilisi		
Ukrainian Orthodox Church					
<b>'Traditional' Orthodox Churches</b>					
Popovsky Old Believers	Bishop Savva		Tbilisi  Gori		Mostly dissident ethnic Russians  Land has been acquired but building has not yet begun (2004)
Bezpopovsky Old Believers					Mostly dissident ethnic Russians
Dukhoboriy Orthodox					Mostly dissident ethnic Russians. The majority have emigrated.
Christian Orthodox Church in Georgia	Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston		Tbilisi (x3)	Fr Zurab Aroshvili (congregation meets in private homes) <a href="mailto:frzurab@hotmail.com">frzurab@hotmail.com</a>	Jurisdiction of Ephraim, first Hierarch of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America. Opposed to ecumenical involvement. <a href="http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Thebes/1865/">http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Thebes/1865/</a>
			Patardzeuli	Fr. Gela Aroshvili	
			Kut'ai'si	Fr. David Georgadze	
			Shemokmedi	(Building destroyed by Georgian Orthodox supporters)	
			Zion Monastery of the Dormition of the Theotokos	Archimandrite John Sheklashvili	

### Oriental Orthodox Churches

Armenian Apostolic Church	Catholicos Karekin I		Tbilisi	Vicar General Fr. Nairik Kushyan	Have some 20 parishes, mainly in southern Georgia (where the ethnic Armenians are most heavily concentrated) (Source: Forum 18). Armenian Vicar general reported that there were 30 worshipping congregations. Christian Study Circle considers there to be only 10 functioning congregations and estimates that there are 300,000 members of this church. Armenians make up 5.7% of the population (Social Trends 2004).
			Gagra, Abkhazia		Meet in a private home with visiting Russian Priests from Krasnodar

### Pentecostal Churches

The Pentecostal Union	Bishop Oleg Khubashvili Nadzaladevi,		Tbilisi	Pastor Nikolai Kalutsky	Russian speaking church.
Madl (Grace) Pentecostal Church			Gldani, Tbilisi	Pastor Zaali Tkeshelashvili	syn. Christians of the Evangelical Faith Church in Georgia
			Tbilisi	Pastor Gia	
			Tbilisi	Pastor Vitali	
			Batumi		Meet in private home
Word of Life Pentecostal Church			Tbilisi	Pastor Mamuka Jebisashvili	Appears to have Swedish links
			Tbilisi	Pastor Viktor Lutzik (Has its own building. Pastor Jebisashvili's congregation meets there)	
			Gori	Pastor Georgi Chitadze	
United Pentecostal Church International			Tbilisi	Pastor James Flynn and his wife	
Apostolic Pentecostal Church (Followers of Jesus Christ)		c/o PO Box 160, Tbilisi 380002			Active in publishing in Georgian and Russian. <a href="http://www.followersofjesuschrist.org">www.followersofjesuschrist.org</a> as Up Way Publications
'Word of Bible' Full Gospel Georgian Church			Mtskheta, Tbilisi (Meets Tuesdays & Saturdays)	<a href="mailto:satevari@hotmail.com">satevari@hotmail.com</a>	Syn. 'Victory' <a href="http://mitglied.lycos.de/tbilisi1/galilea.htm">http://mitglied.lycos.de/tbilisi1/galilea.htm</a>
International Fellowship		32 Asatiani str. Tbilisi	Tbilisi		

### Protestant Churches

Evangelical Lutheran Church	Bischof Dr. Andreas Stökl	Tbilisi 380002 Terenti-Granel-Str. 15, Georgia Tel.: +995-32-943 129; Fax: +995-32-943 138 <a href="mailto:elkg_tbilisi@gol.ge">elkg_tbilisi@gol.ge</a>			There are 5 Lutheran congregations, 1 in Tbilisi. Partnered by the Evangelical Church of Württemberg. It has a Diakonal work.
			Tbilisi	Pastor Gary Azikov	
			Asureti		
			Rust'avi		
			Sukhum, Abkhazia		Travel from Georgia into Abkhazia is difficult
The Evangelical Baptist Church of Georgia	Bishop Malkhaz Songulashvili				General Secretary: Revd Merab Geprashandvili Has 65 congregations & 53 mission stations throughout Georgia

Association of Christian-Baptist Pastor Levan

Kuchatani

			Velitsikhe	
			Others?	Reported by F18
Unregistered Baptist churches			Tbilisi	Pastor Sergei Osipov Russian speaking congregation
			Ochamchire, Abkhazia	
Salvation Army	Regional officer: Georgi Salarishvili	Megrelidze St. 16 Tbilisi, 0177 Tel: +995 (32) 39 9654 Fax: +995 (32) 39 9619 <a href="http://www.salvationarmy.ge">www.salvationarmy.ge</a>		Has eight congregations in Georgia, beginning work in 1992.
<b>Roman &amp; Eastern Catholic Churches</b>				
Roman Catholic Churches	Bishop Pasotto			Sources: Forum 18 News Service 14.11.2003 When the Pope visited Georgia (9th November 1999) and celebrated Mass, there were 9,000 people present. Approximately 1,100 of these were Baptists with Orthodox also present. This correlates with the figures given for Roman Catholic attendances listed below. Bishop Pasotto (personal conversation 17th August 2004) reported 26 congregations (only half have their own building) served by 14 Priests and a further 4 Priests working with Caritas Georgia. Christian Study Circle reports that there is a combined total of 65 Roman & Eastern Catholic congregations. They locate ( <i>contra</i> Operation World) the 'Syrian Orthodox' within the Chaldean-rite Roman Catholic churches
			Batumi	Confiscated by Gov't and given to the Patriarchate in the 80s and 90s
			Kutaisi	<i>ditto</i>
			Gori	<i>ditto</i>
			Ude	<i>ditto</i>
			Ivliita	Fr. Jiri Schimerowski <i>ditto</i>
			Akhalts'ikhe	(land acquired but no building yet)
			Sukhum, Abkhazia	(Church building. Served by Polish priests from Sochi, Russia)
			Gagra, Abkhazia	(Meets in a private home. Served by Polish priests from Sochi, Russia)
			Valle village	Fr. Jiri Schimerowski
Chaldean Rite (Assyrian) Catholics			Tbilisi	Fr. Benny Yadgar (Land acquired but building not yet constructed)
<b>Other Christian</b>				
Seventh Day Adventists	Irma Mosiashvili (Spokesperson)		Kutaisi	
<b>Other religious groups</b>				
Jehovah's Witnesses	Genadi Gudadze		Tbilisi	The only Kingdom Hall in Georgia Meet in private homes across the rest of Georgia. Active since 1953
			Bolnisi	
			Otarsheni	(Meeting hall inside a compound)
			Senaki	(W. Georgia)
			Kaspi	(Open air meetings held here)
			Abkhazia region	Abkhazia claim to have 'several thousand adherents' in the region (Source: Forum 18 27.04.2004)
Muslims	Gazi Ali Aliev, Spiritual leader of Georgia's Muslims	2, Botanic str. Tbilisi		Email - Bishop Malkhaz (14.09.2004) There is only one mosque in Tbilisi for both Sunni and Shia muslims, with 40 mosques elsewhere in Georgia.
Judaism	Chief Rabbi: Avraham Mikhealashvili	Shevchenko str 10., Tbilisi 380005 Tel: +995 32 93 39 99		Email - Bishop Malkhaz (14.09.2004) A variety of agencies serve the local community. The Joint Distribution Committee operates Chesed Eliyahu, an agency that Darrell Jackson

provides dinner every day for 240 needy people. In early August, a new "campus" opened that houses a variety of Jewish organizations, including Chesed Eliyahu, Hillel, a Jewish information centre, Menorah, Yonat Hashalom (a Jewish/Georgian dance troupe) and a cultural centre, he said.

The building was financed by a contribution from the Posner family in Pittsburgh. A local businessman, Badri Patarkatsishvili, who has interests in construction and the media and has been linked to Russian oligarchs, is also one of the community's major benefactors.

The Sochnut (Jewish Agency) operates in Georgia as does an office of the World Congress of Georgian Jews, of which Batiashvili is a member. The congress offers cultural, religious, youth and women's programs.

Chabad Lubavitch also has a presence there. In January 2002, the movement opened offices in central Tbilisi and it now operates a kindergarten and has plans to open a school as well. The offices feature a computer centre and Internet café. Last June, about 100 children attended a two-week day camp at Tsemi, near Bakurian. And last spring's Passover seders attracted 500 people at the Sarajishvili restaurant.

Georgian Synagogue of Tbilisi	45/47, Leselidze str., Mtskhet, Tbilisi	Tbilisi	Rabbi Avimelech Rosenblath	"The Synagogue attracts between 80-100 for Shabat worship with up to 400 for High Holy Days. The Ashkenazi Synagogue has a smaller congregation." Source: Rabbi Rosenblath <a href="http://www.cinews.com/viewarticle.asp?id=1840">http://www.cinews.com/viewarticle.asp?id=1840</a>
Ashkenazi Synagogue of Tbilisi	13 Kozhevni per	Kutaisi		
Bahai		Tbilisi		Has received help from Les Gornall, a Baha' from N. Ireland.
Hari Krishna	Antimos Natsulishvili (Bhuashana Das)	16 Kacharava str., Avchalskoye sh., 380053 Tbilisi		Meet in a temple in a private house
				+995 32 62 33 26 +995 32 98 58 12 <a href="mailto:nandapriya.hks@pamho.net">nandapriya.hks@pamho.net</a>
Satanists				In a report dated, 03.08.1999 Human Rights Watch reported on the activities of Georgian Satanists. "Still another headache for the church are the satanists who are preparing for the end of the world. Georgian satanists maintain that the sword of Satan is buried on the territory of the southern Caucasus and that Georgia will become the epicenter of the struggle between forces of good and evil on the Day of Judgment." (tr. by PDS) from Stetson University History Department web <a href="http://www.stetson.edu/~psteeves/reinews/">http://www.stetson.edu/~psteeves/reinews/</a>

## 5b. Reported community strength – all religious groups in Georgia (2000)<sup>14</sup>

	Bible Society Report 2002			World Christian Handbook	Operation World		World Christian Encyclopedia	
	As % of pop'n <sup>15</sup>	Total		Total <sup>16</sup>	Total <sup>17</sup>		As % of pop'n <sup>18</sup>	Total
Georgian Orthodox	36.6	1,967,982		2,030,000	2,400,000		58	2,500,000
Old Believers								5,000
Armenian Apostolic	5.6	301,112		310,780	330,000			340,000
Russian Orthodox	2.7	145,179		154,000	100,000			160,000
Syrian Orthodox	0.2	10,754		6,600	4,700			5,600
Roman Catholic	1.8	96,786		35,200	45,000		1.1	50,200
						Ukrainian Orthodox		25,000
						Assyrian Apostolic		5,000
			<i>Roman Catholic: Eastern Rite</i>	18,500	17,000			23,510
						Other Orthodox		1,000
			<i>Roman Catholic: Latin Rite</i>	16,700	28,000			26,510
Protestant	0.1	5,377						
			Baptist	17,790	12,000			16,000
			Lutheran	2,000	1,600			2,000
			Pentecostal Church	12,320	12,000			1,250
			Ind. Pentecostal	8,920	5,000			5,000
			Charismatic	1,180				825
Other	0.5	26,885						
			SD Adventists	220				170
			Jehovah Witnesses	720	36,000			500
Jewish	0.3	16,131					0.5	22,080
						Muslim	19.3	958,475
						Bahai	0.0	1,725
						S. Army		2,000
Non-religious	41.2	2,215,324					18	894,803

Table 1: Comparisons of religious community strength in Georgia in 2000 from four major sources of global Christian and religious data

The table illustrates the estimates of religious community size by the 'Big Four', namely the World Christian Encyclopedia, the World Christian Handbook, Operation World, and (in this case) the Bible Society. The colour coding is used to assist with the identification of which data source is being used at which point in Tables 1 and 2

### 5c. Religious community strength, levels of activity and leadership in Georgia (2000)

		'Active' members	Community	Leaders	Congregations
Eastern Orthodox	Georgian Orthodox	1,154,277	3,062,000 <sup>19</sup>	730	512
	Russian Orthodox	7,600	54,650	-	-
	Ukranian. Orthodox	1,300	7,600	-	-
	True Orthodox	200 <sup>20</sup>	800	5	5
	Old Believers	250	1,000	-	5
	Other Orthodox	250	1,000	-	-
Oriental Orthodox	Armenian Apostolic	36,000	261,600	11	12 (30)
	Syriac Orthodox	3,360	5,600	-	-
Roman Catholic <sup>21</sup>	<i>Roman Catholic: Latin Rite</i>	7,500	35,050 <sup>22</sup>	14	26
	<i>Roman Catholic: Armenian Rite</i>	2,000	10,000	-	26
	<i>Roman Catholic – Chaldean rite</i>	1,000	5,000	-	13
Protestant	Evangelical Baptist Church of Georgia	5,100	15,000 <sup>23</sup>	25	118 <sup>24</sup>
	Association of Christian-Baptist Churches	800	1,200	-	8
	Lutheran	1,000 <sup>25</sup>	1,500	4	6
	Pentecostal Union <sup>26</sup>	4,000	6,000	-	2 (minimum)
	Independent Pentecostals	2,500	5,000	-	11 (minimum)
	Charismatic	1,500	1,600	-	5
	Salvation Army	700 <sup>27</sup>	950	18	8
Other	Seventh Day Adventists	343 <sup>28</sup>	450	6	10 <sup>29</sup>
	Jehovah Witnesses	15,300 <sup>10</sup>	30,000 <sup>30</sup>	-	127
	Jewish	2,000	3,780 <sup>31</sup>	3 (minimum)	3 (minimum)
	Muslim	24,000	420,500 <sup>32</sup>	-	40
	Bahai	30 <sup>33</sup>	50	-	1
	Hare Krishna	30 <sup>34</sup>	40	-	1
	Satanists	20	40	-	1
	Non-religious	-	742,800	-	-
Total 'active' (27% attending ≥ 1/month EVS 2001)		1,261,500			

Table 2: Religious community strength in Georgia in 2000 (amended 2004-5)

This table attempts to correct data for 2000, drawing on the fullest possible range of sources, including a personal visit in August of 2004. I am still cautious about being definitive about the relationship of the respective sizes of the Orthodox 'community' and that of its 'active' members.<sup>35</sup> I am also cautious about what I suspect is over-reporting by the Jehovah Witnesses. It is extremely difficult to estimate the size of the Pentecostal and Charismatic communities and for this I have relied upon the Big Four. I am not aware of any reliable data for the relative sizes of the Chaldean and Armenian-rite Catholics, I have estimated this from the number of 39 congregations for the two rites combined, reported to me personally. I assume 600 Muslims visit a mosque at least once per month and that 1,200 Armenians attend worship

## 5d. Population statistics

BS (1997)	OW (2000)	WCH (2000)	WCE (2000)	Statistical Office
5,377,000	4,967,561	5,527,000	4,968,000	4,672,200

Table 3: Population resident in the country of Georgia in 2000, estimated and actual

The 2002 Census was sponsored by a number of non-Georgian National Statistical Agencies. It was a full census of the territory controlled by the Government in Tbilisi. The population of the disputed territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia was carefully estimated and this figure is included in that given above.<sup>36</sup> The National Statistical Office publishes population statistics. The figures for 2000 are used in Table 3 for each year from 1989. The *World Christian Encyclopedia* and *Operation World* underestimated the 2000 population whilst the *World Christian Handbook* and the *Bible Society* overestimated it.

Most importantly for the predicting of trends in church attendance, the Georgian population has been decreasing by an annual average of 6.7% since 1989. This decrease is most marked among the ethnic Russians and Ukrainians. Between 1989 and 2002, the population has decreased by 799,100 (14.5%). This is important in trying to understand general patterns of church attendance but it is particularly in trying to predict future patterns of attendance in those churches traditionally supported by ethnic Russians and Ukrainians, including their respective Orthodox Churches, Independent Baptist Churches, and the Pentecostal Churches.

### Illustrating the issues involved in collecting data from unstable situations

Predicting forward to the year 2000, the 'Big Four' estimated that the size of the Russian Orthodox Church in Georgia would be somewhere between 100,000 to 160,000. Whilst estimating this figure for the year 2000 doubtless reflected a projection from the 1989 figure of 341,000 ethnic Russians in Georgia, the flight of ethnic Russians from Georgia between 1989 and 2002 has seen a reduction in their community strength from 341,000 to 67,700, or from 6.3% to 1.5% of the population.

It can be safely assumed that involvement in the Russian Orthodox Church is almost certainly dependent upon being of Russian ethnicity. In the absence of reliable figures for church community strength in 2000, it is possible to use Statistical Office data to determine the actual size of the ethnic Russian population in the year 2000. It can be calculated that the percentage of the Georgian population that was ethnically Russian in 2000 was 1.8%, or 84,100.

The European Values Survey indicates that 9% of Russians (in Russia) claim that they attend a religious service at least once a month. Evidence suggests that this is likely to be higher among the Protestant community than among the more nominally Orthodox community. However, it is possible to argue that expatriate nationals living abroad are more likely to use church attendance as a way of maintaining ethnic and cultural roots. Consequently, we might argue that 9% is probably a good figure to use in order to calculate the number of those from within the ethnic Russian population who attend church at least once a month

If we assume that 9% of the ethnically Russian population attends a church service at least once a month, we can calculate that the number of 'active' Russian Orthodox worshippers in Georgia in 2000 was no larger than 7,570.

## 5e. References

- Anon *Bible Society of Georgia - Report 2002*  
Anon *European Baptist Federation Directory 2005*, Prague, 2004  
D. Barrett et al (Eds.) *World Christian Encyclopedia (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed)* Oxford 2001  
T. Beridze (Ed.) *Social Trends in Georgia 2004*, Tbilisi 2004  
P. Brierley (Ed.) *World Christian Handbook* London, 1997  
R. Inglehart *Human Beliefs and Values: a cross-cultural sourcebook based on the 1999-2002 values surveys* Buenos Aires 2004  
P. Johnstone & J. Mandryk *Operation World CD ROM* Carlisle  
S. Linzey *Christianity in Russia and Post-Communist Europe* Pasadena, 2003

### Website directories of the following:

Seventh Day Adventist Church	<a href="http://www.adventiststatistics.org">www.adventiststatistics.org</a>
The Salvation Army Georgia Region	<a href="http://www.salvationarmy.ge/engreg/englocat.htm">www.salvationarmy.ge/engreg/englocat.htm</a>
Orthodox Church of Georgia	<a href="http://www.patriarchate.ge">www.patriarchate.ge</a>
<b>The Bible Society in Georgia</b>	<a href="http://www.biblesociety.org/bs-geo.htm">www.biblesociety.org/bs-geo.htm</a>
Baptist Union of Brazil	<a href="http://www.jmm.org.br">www.jmm.org.br</a>
Forum 18 News Service	<a href="http://www.forum18.org">www.forum18.org</a>
Evangelical Baptist Church of Georgia	<a href="http://www.ebcgeorgia.org">www.ebcgeorgia.org</a>
The Catholic Hierarchy	<a href="http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/diocese/dcauc.html">www.catholic-hierarchy.org/diocese/dcauc.html</a>
US State Department	<a href="http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2004/35455.htm">http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2004/35455.htm</a>
The Jehovah Witnesses	<a href="http://www.watchtower.org/statistics/wqworldwide_report.htm">www.watchtower.org/statistics/wqworldwide_report.htm</a>
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia (ELKRAS)	<a href="http://www.elkras.org/de/regionale_de/geor_de.htm">www.elkras.org/de/regionale_de/geor_de.htm</a>

## Endnotes

- 1 For an accessible treatment, see Paul Avis, *A Church Drawing Near: Spirituality and Mission in a Post-Christian Culture* (London: Continuum, 2003). For American sociologists, the context of a highly modern and highly religious society has provided a sharp contrast to their observations of European societies; similarly modern but secularised. The most recent assaults on secularization theories have come from the 'rational choice' school of sociologists of religions. See, for example, Stark and Finke *Acts of Faith; explaining the Human Side of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000)
- 2 R Fung 'Evangelising a Secular Society' in *Proclaiming Christ in Christ's Way* Samuel, V. (Oxford: Regnum 1989) p146
- 3 Frances D'Emilio, 'Italian Minister Withdraws as Candidate for E.U. Commission' in *The Washington Post* Sunday 30th October 2004 pA30
- 4 Religiosity in Iceland is surprisingly higher than in all Northern European Countries, Poland and Ireland are far less affected by secularization and individualism than other countries. In Spain, levels of trust in the Church are increasing and in Italy, religiosity is increasing (though not institutional religious activity).
- 5 Halman, L. & Riis, O., *Religion in Secularizing Society* (Brill: Leiden, 2003), p9
- 6 Metropolitan Daniel Ciobotea *Confessing the Truth in Love: Orthodox perceptions of life, mission and unity* (Iasi: Trinitas, 2001)
- 7 Davie, G *Europe the Exceptional Case* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2002), xi
- 8 ENI reported that 200,000 copies were sold in four days. ENI 10th November 2004
- 9 Halman, L. & Riis, O. Ibid 'in both 1981 and 1990, the French and the Danish are the least religious people.' p11
- 10 See the fashion website [www.g-sus.com](http://www.g-sus.com)
- 11 Members of London congregations have been told that they are being sent to plant congregation in another country.
- 12 Halman, L. & Riis, O., *Religion in Secularizing Society*, Brill: Leiden, 2003 p11
- 13 See [www.europeanvalues.nl](http://www.europeanvalues.nl) for further information.
- 14 I assume that, for purposes of comparison, these figures relate to the year 2000 (WCE is 1995). I am comparing community / affiliation size.
- 15 Source: *Bible Society Annual Report 2002* <<http://www.biblesociety.org/bs-geo.htm>>
- 16 Source: *World Christian Handbook*
- 17 Source: *Operation World*. OW uses the term 'affiliates' for what WCH describes as 'community'
- 18 Source: *World Christian Encyclopedia*. Figures for 1995
- 19 Official Georgian Orthodox website reports 65% of population identifying with the Orthodox Church. [www.patriarchate.ge](http://www.patriarchate.ge) The figure for active members reflects that of the Bible Society report, a report compiled within Georgia and therefore credited with a reasonable level of accuracy. The caution of Mark Elliott, noted elsewhere, should be borne in mind when assessing these figures, as they are intended to refer to the Orthodox 'community'.
- 20 Estimated from number of congregations, assuming fifty per congregation. The majority of these congregations met in homes.
- 21 Source: Catholic Hierarchy website <http://catholic-hierarchy.org/diocese/dcauc.html> viewed 10.09.2004
- 22 See R. Roberson, *The Eastern Christian Churches: a brief survey* Rome p187
- 23 Source: <[www.ebcgeorgia.org](http://www.ebcgeorgia.org)> reports 15,000 active members in 50 churches and 53 mission stations (15.08.2004)
- 24 This total includes a total of 65 churches and 53 preaching stations. Personal email with Bishop Malkhaz April 2005
- 25 Source: Web report indicated 'over 1,000 members' early 2004
- 26 The US State Department 2004 estimates 9,000 Georgian & Russian Pentecostals.
- 27 Based on a report of '500 soldiers, adherents and friends attending a central act of worship in 1999.
- 28 Source: <[www.adventiststatistics.org](http://www.adventiststatistics.org)> Figures are active members for 2002. Reports indicate strength of over 300 in 2003
- 29 Six registered churches plus 4 'companies' [www.adventiststatistics.org/view\\_summary.asp?FieldInstID=222829](http://www.adventiststatistics.org/view_summary.asp?FieldInstID=222829) April 2005
- 30 Source: [http://www.watchtower.org/statistics/worldwide\\_report.htm](http://www.watchtower.org/statistics/worldwide_report.htm) Figures are memorial attendance for 2003. Membership given as 15,200. Witnesses have been active since 1953
- 31 Census data for 2002 indicates 3,600 Jews in Georgian controlled territory, representing 95% of the total population of the country of Georgia. Our figure is adjusted to allow for Jews living in the autonomous regions of Georgia at a similar level to that elsewhere in Georgia.
- 32 Source: US State Department report 2000-04 variously report the size of the Muslim community at between 8 and 9.9% of the population. This is considerably influenced by the presence of Chechen refugees in the valleys of northern Georgia.
- 33 Estimated from reports and photographs of visits to the Bahai community in Georgia. I err on the side of overestimating.
- 34 Estimate, based on experience of the size of Hare Krishna communities in Central & Eastern Europe. The community in Tbilisi also operates a vegetarian restaurant.
- 35 See the article by Mark Elliott 'Analysis of World Christian Encyclopedia Figures for Post-Soviet Christians' in *East -West Church & Ministry Report* Vol 9 No 3 Summer 2001
- 36 A fuller explanation can be found at [http://www.statistics.ge/Main/census/Eng\\_ed/Chapter%201%20c%20Eng.htm#Administrative-Territorial%20Units](http://www.statistics.ge/Main/census/Eng_ed/Chapter%201%20c%20Eng.htm#Administrative-Territorial%20Units)