

Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twenty-First Century

Edited by
Lucian N. Leustean

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25 The Armenian Apostolic Church

Hratch Tchilingirian

When in 2001 the Armenian Apostolic Church celebrated the 1,700th anniversary of its founding and the country's adoption of Christianity as the state religion in AD 301, the Republic of Armenia also celebrated the tenth anniversary of its independence from the Soviet Union and communist rule. Twenty years since independence, the Armenian Church, the only national institution that has existed continuously in Armenian history – even while Armenian statehood was lost for centuries – faces many challenges. While the physical rebuilding of churches and religious institutions continues in the post-Soviet era, one of the greatest challenges to the Church and its hierarchy in this age of globalisation is to make the Armenian Church relevant again for Armenian society. As a lay member put it in an open letter to the head of the Church: 'What good is it to have newly built churches, institutions and properties if we are still unable to build the spiritual church of our people?'¹ This chapter will present a discussion of the three main questions facing the Armenian Church in the post-Soviet era: (1) What is the role of the church in a post-Soviet society and in a country still in social, political and economic transition? (2) What are the challenges and complexities in church–state relations since independence; (3) What are the critical questions in the Church's relationship with the Armenian communities spread around the world, where more Armenians live than in the Republic of Armenia?

Today, the overwhelming majority of Armenia's population of 3 million adheres, at least nominally, to the Christian faith (98.7 per cent).² The Armenian Church or the 'National Church' – officially called the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church³ – is the largest religious institution in the country.⁴ Since independence in 1991, however, other denominations and religious movements have challenged the primary position of the Church and introduced 'competition' in the religious sphere. In addition to Christian denominations, alternative religious movements have appeared in Armenia, including Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Transcendental Meditation and pagans.⁵ Nevertheless, the Armenian Church, remains the largest national institution with around 500 parishes and churches in over 30 countries around the world and about 700 bishops and priests

servicing an estimated 8 million Armenians living in Armenia, Karabakh and the diaspora.⁶

History and hierarchy

Traditionally, it is believed that two of Christ's Apostles, Thaddeus and Bartholomew, preached Christianity in Armenia as early as the second half of the first century. Armenia is considered to be the first nation to adopt Christianity as its state religion in 301 through the efforts of Gregory the Illuminator (c. 240–325) and King Tiridates III (c. 238–314).⁷ The Armenian Church belongs to the Orthodox family of churches, known as the Oriental Orthodox or 'Non-Chalcedonian' churches. It shares many commonalities with the Byzantine and Slavic Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches, especially in the liturgy, but differs over certain theological issues.

The main theological differences between the Armenian Church (and generally Orthodox churches) and the Roman Catholic Church are related to papal supremacy and papal infallibility. There are also other minor differences between these two branches of Christianity, for example, regarding the rules of fasting; unleavened bread at the Eucharist (West); the manner of conferring confirmation; the celibacy of the clergy; divorce (not sanctioned in Roman Catholicism); and purgatory (which the East does not teach). On the other hand, the main difference between the Byzantine tradition (Eastern Orthodox) – also known as Chalcedonian churches – and the Armenian Church (along with the Oriental Orthodox churches) has been on the issue of Christology, namely, regarding the dogma on Christ's Divine and Human natures.⁸ While Christological terminology and debates might seem trivial to laymen, the theological controversy continued for centuries, often becoming a matter of political influence and expediency. In 1990, the theologians and official representatives of both Eastern (Byzantine and Slavic) and Oriental Orthodox churches – after years of dialogue and consultation – agreed in a formal statement that their theological understanding, especially their Christology, is 'orthodox'. The statement called for unity and communion between the two branches of Orthodox Christianity. The document was sent to the respective leaders of the participating churches for review and formal approval. The active dialogue and formal discussions in recent years have fostered a movement towards restored communion among the Orthodox churches.⁹

The Armenian Church has been actively involved in the ecumenical movement since the 1960s through the World Council of Churches, as well as bilateral commissions and dialogues with the Roman Catholic Church, the Byzantine Orthodox churches, especially the Russian and Greek Churches, the Anglican Church and others. It maintains close working relations with the Oriental Orthodox family of churches with which she is in communion, comprising the Coptic, Syrian Orthodox, Ethiopian and Indian Malabar churches.¹⁰

The Catholicosate of All Armenians – also known as the 'Mother See of Holy Ejmiatsin' – is the supreme ecclesiastical centre of the Church, located

in the town of Vagharshapat, 25 km from Yerevan. It is recognised as ‘pre-eminent’ among the four Hierarchical Sees of the Church, which include the Catholicosate of Cilicia located in Antelias, Lebanon (founded in 1930, but with roots going back to the thirteenth century), the Patriarchate of Jerusalem from the early fourteenth century and the Patriarchate of Constantinople in Istanbul established in 1461 by the Ottoman Sultan. The ‘Catholicos of All Armenians’ is elected for life by the National Ecclesiastical Assembly – the highest legislative body in the Church – and enjoys ‘primacy of honour’ among the other hierarchical heads.¹¹ The National Assembly comprises two-thirds lay representatives of Armenian people from around the world and one third clergy. The delegates to the Assembly are elected by church communities in Armenia, Karabakh and the Diaspora. Likewise, the Catholicos of Cilicia and the Patriarch of Constantinople are elected by lay and clergy in national ecclesiastical assemblies. The Patriarch of Jerusalem is the exception, elected solely by the clerical brotherhood (consisting only of monks).

The involvement of laymen in the affairs of the Armenian Church is one of its unique features. Unlike, for example, the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox churches of the Byzantine tradition, which maintain monarchical and aristocratic structures, lay people actively participate in the administrative, legislative and economic affairs of the Armenian Church. Indeed, the tradition of lay involvement in the election of bishops and *catholicoi* goes back to ancient times.¹² However, decisions concerning faith, dogma, liturgy or spirituality remain in the exclusive domain of the College of Bishops of the Church and the Catholicos.

Each Hierarchical See in the Armenian Church has its own religious order (brotherhood), ecclesiastical jurisdiction over a region with dioceses and parish churches and internal administrative by-laws. These Hierarchical Sees are not separate churches, but are part of the ‘One, Holy, Apostolic Church’ (as pronounced in the Creed) and are one in dogma, theology, liturgy and rendered services. The Catholicate of All Armenians is recognised as the ‘pre-eminent’ see (*Naxamecar Atoř*) among the four Hierarchical Sees of the Church. The Patriarchs of Jerusalem and Constantinople have the rank of Archbishop. They are autonomous in the internal affairs of their Patriarchate and pledge canonical allegiance to the Catholicate of All Armenians. The Catholicos of Cilicia in Lebanon is equal in rank, but not in position, to the Catholicos of All Armenians. Both are consecrated by the same rite of the Church and enjoy the same privileges of *as* a catholicos, namely, the consecration of bishops and blessing of Holy Muron. However, as has been the case historically, the Catholicos of Cilicia recognises the primacy of honour of the Catholicos of All Armenians in Ejmiatsin.¹³

Under communist rule

The Armenian Church, as was the experience of all other churches and religious groups in the USSR, suffered enormously under Soviet rule, anti-religious propaganda and state-sponsored atheistic indoctrination. Like

her counterparts, the Armenian Church was persecuted, especially in the 1920s and 1930s. A vast number of church properties were lost, priests were exiled or executed, assets and treasures of Ejmiatsin were confiscated and the Church was reduced to its liturgical functions.¹⁴ While attempts by local Soviet Armenian authorities to close down the Holy See of the Armenian Church in Ejmiatsin did not completely succeed, the seven years following the assassination of Catholicos Khoren (Muradbekian) – at his headquarters in Ejmiatsin on 6 April 1938 by NKVD agents¹⁵ – were among the most difficult periods in the history of the Catholicosate. In addition to the loss of property and income, out of some seventy to seventy-five clergy in Ejmiatsin all but seven were arrested and exiled for ‘anti-revolutionary activities’ and hundreds of churches were closed. By 1940 there were only nine functioning Armenian churches in the entire Soviet Union.¹⁶ In general, the Church in Soviet Armenia ‘was kept on a very tight leash, reduced to just a remnant of its former glory’.¹⁷ It was thanks to the importance of the Catholicosate of All Armenians in Ejmiatsin and to the large Armenian diaspora that the centuries-old institution was saved from ‘complete oblivion’.¹⁸

Persecution and pressure eased after Stalin’s death¹⁹ and the election of the Romanian-born Catholicos Vazgen I (Baljian) in 1955 ushered in a new period in the life of the Church. Under his leadership, the Church gradually came out of its isolation. Using the Church’s long-established network of dioceses and churches around the world, he created bridges between Soviet Armenia and the diaspora through Ejmiatsin and strengthened relations with wealthy communities and institutions outside the USSR. This increased Ejmiatsin’s prestige in the eyes of the communists, who were ever mindful of projecting a good image abroad, and asserted the Catholicos’s national position. Moreover, numerous donations and sponsorship from the diaspora enabled Vazgen I to renovate many historic churches and monasteries and to engage in cultural-educational activities inside Soviet Armenia, including the construction of a modern museum and the establishment of a new printing press in Ejmiatsin.

Leading the Church for nearly forty years – one of the longest-serving pontiffs in the history of the Church – Vazgen I, too, endured state pressures and interference in Church affairs. But, over the years, he came to be respected and recognised as a ‘national figure’ in Soviet Armenia. By the late 1970s, the Church enjoyed more freedom to carry out its basic religious functions and the number of active churches reached forty. An important development was government permission granted to the Catholicos to send young priests abroad to further their theological education at Western universities.

In the late 1980s Mikhail Gorbachev’s *glasnost* and *perestroika* heralded a new era for the Church under communism and brought changes of attitude in government and society. Matters of church and religion, in general, were openly and publicly discussed. As in other former Soviet republics, the old socio-political boundaries changed: a process of social relocation and the strengthening of old identity references were soon put in place. The

restoration of the 'national character' of Armenia and Armenian institutions was part of this process, which included, for example, renaming cities, towns, villages and streets.

The return to religion and spirituality, enhanced by *perestroika*, coincided with several major national events and developments, which have had a far-reaching impact on Armenia and Armenians: (1) the Karabakh Movement which started in February 1988 and later turned into an independence movement; (2) the devastating earthquake in December of the same year; (3) the pogroms of Armenians in Azerbaijani towns; (4) the war with Azerbaijan in and for Nagorno Karabakh and (5) the subsequent economic and energy blockade of Armenia by Azerbaijan and Turkey, which created harsh conditions for the population, especially in the winters of 1992 and 1993. As one young clergyman commented, these major events 'created a new process of national self-examination and self-assertion'.²⁰ The 'mother church' was expected – at least from the point of view of the clergy – to play a role in these 'historic' developments.

The beginning of the Karabakh Movement in early 1988 – demanding the reunification of Nagorno Karabakh (an autonomous region within Azerbaijan SSR) with Armenia – was a major test of Gorbachev's new policy of openness and a major turning point in Soviet Armenia. The conflict between Armenians and Azerbaijanis over Karabakh – a small enclave of 4388 sq. km, with a population of about 150,000 – is the oldest conflict in the former Soviet Union, starting in the 1920s. A popular movement for self-determination by Karabakh Armenians turned into a full-scale war between Armenians and Azerbaijanis in 1991. The war is not officially over, but a fragile ceasefire since May 1994 is still in force.²¹

As the Karabakh Movement gained strength in both Yerevan and Stepanakert, the capital of the enclave, and some 1 million Armenians demonstrated in the streets of Yerevan, it attracted extensive international attention and became an urgent matter for Gorbachev and the Communist Party leadership in Moscow. In the early stages of the movement, the role of the Armenian Church, personified in Catholicos Vazgen, was ambiguous. On the one hand, Ejmiatsin was reluctant to publicly oppose the Kremlin's policies, on the other, as an Armenian national institution, the Church could not be indifferent to the popular struggle. Catholicos Vazgen argued that Armenia's survival was only possible 'within the great and mighty family of Soviet nationalities' and popular demands for Karabakh's union with Armenia would not lead to any tangible results.²² Based on his decades-long experience with Soviet authorities, he feared – as expressed in his appearance on Armenian television – an anti-Soviet movement would lead to 'offer[ing] Armenia on a platter to our centuries-old enemy'.²³ As such, throughout the initial phase of the movement in Armenia, he appealed for 'good sense, far-sightedness and discipline'.²⁴

However, Vazgen I was widely criticised by both intellectuals and the public for not supporting the people and for accommodating the policies of Soviet

authorities. Some demonstrators during street protests in Yerevan carried placards declaring: ‘The Catholicos has crucified our faith.’²⁵ In response to his critics, Vazgen I assured the people on Armenian television (25 February 1988) that he had sent a telegram to Gorbachev supporting the calls of the people: ‘I believe that this demand is natural, legal and constitutional’, he said, appealing to the population ‘to remain calm and to await the decision of the Soviet authorities on the Karabakh’s status’.²⁶ When a popular uprising flared up in the streets of Yerevan, the Communist Party leadership of Armenia was unable to control the escalation of the situation. Moscow sought Vazgen I’s help to exert his influence on the people, which he did. A few days later, on 29 February, Gorbachev reported to the Politburo:

[Vazgen I] promised to use all his authority not to allow any anti-Sovietism. He had received many telephone calls from abroad. According to his word, he had given all of them this response: don’t interfere in these matters; there must be no anti-Sovietism; here, within the bounds of the Soviet Union, the Armenian nation is reviving. At the same time he said that real problems do exist, that these events have not arisen from nowhere. In this he referred to one example of his experiences.²⁷

In an appeal during one of the most critical moments of the mass protests Vazgen I, appearing on television on 7 July 1988, shocked the population of Armenia with a harsh warning: ‘If you do not listen to me – your patriarch – I will curse my destiny and remain silent until eternity.’²⁸ This ‘final call’ for calmness had a great impact in Armenia.

By 1989, the Karabakh Committee, which grew out of the popular movement, had been successful in consolidating political activities in Armenia under the banner of the Armenian National Movement (ANM).²⁹ The first congress of the ANM, with some 1,500 delegates, convened in Yerevan in October 1989. The Soviet Armenian government and the Armenian communist leadership officially recognised ANM. This was the beginning of the erosion of Soviet power in Armenia. In early November, the ANM delegates visited Ejmiatsin to meet with the Catholicos. Despite Vazgen I’s earlier cautious stance, the leaders of the Movement still considered him an important national figure and a supporter of pan-Armenian causes, especially in view of the fact that he had influence in the diaspora through the Church’s dioceses and parishes abroad. In his welcoming address, Vazgen I assured his audience, that ‘unlike other churches, we [the Armenian Church] are not preoccupied with inquisitions. All Armenians, whether believers or not, we consider them true children of the Armenian Church without discrimination.’³⁰ He explained the place, role and position of the Church in the ‘long history’ of the Armenian nation and positioned the Church right in the centre of national life:

The national identity of the Armenian nation, the national ethos of the Armenian people, and the national ideology of the Armenian people have

been forged here at Holy Ejmiatsin. ... All the significant events in our history have been ... anchored on spiritual foundations, Christian faith, national literature, fortified culture, and liberation of the fatherland.

Let it not be assumed that in the formation of the national ideology, the Armenian Church was a follower or a conformist. No. The Armenian Church for the past seventeen centuries has been the author and the leader [of these matters].

You can be assured that our Church, headed by Ejmiatsin, is always ready to open her arms and heart before all those Armenians, before those organisations, who would be willing to think, speak and work by this spirit and by properly understood national realization. This spirit ... has preserved also our Church in the last decades, here in a Soviet country; even in the bad times of self-worship, though under isolated conditions, the Armenian Church has always kept the light of this spirit lit in Holy Ejmiatsin and in the diaspora.

He then outlined three 'important imperatives' for Armenia: (1) 'the guarantee and the strengthening of political security' in view of Armenia's geopolitical position; (2) reconstruction and development of the economy, especially after the earthquake; and (3) creation of uniformity to 'advance the prosperity of Armenian national culture in the fatherland'.³¹ On the one hand, Vazgen I cautiously avoided endorsing the political aspirations of the ANM – in effect subordinating independence to security and democracy to national unity – on the other, he showed readiness to help in the 'national struggle'.³² Most importantly, as ANM was quickly becoming the dominant political force in Armenia, Vazgen I made it very clear to the emerging new leadership that 'the Church is not with any side, the Church is with all the sides'.³³ He thus reiterated the Church's place and legitimacy above and beyond the emerging national entities.

When two years later Armenia became an independent state, the Catholicos was already fully behind the newly independent state and its leadership. In an appeal just before the national referendum on independence held on 21 September, Vazgen I declared:

The cry for freedom and independence is the imperative of our centuries-old history, the dictate of our nation's consciousness and the guarantee of our future existence. The Armenian Apostolic Church looks forward anxiously and unhesitatingly to hearing our people's historical affirmation, and to following that voice. ... On the horizon of the Armenian land there rises that star of independence. Blessings and glory to that radiating star, and to the forever free Armenian nation.³⁴

Shortly after the overwhelming *yes* vote for independence, the Catholicos presided over the swearing in of the first democratically elected president of the newly independent Republic of Armenia and gave his blessing. As

Armenia's independence was eclipsed by the continuing conflict and war with Azerbaijan, the Catholicos continued to speak out for an end to the hostilities in Karabakh and for a peaceful resolution of the conflict.³⁵ In terms of his standing in Armenia and the diaspora, while the entire communist leadership was discredited, the Catholicos was the only national figure who still enjoyed respect and public standing. Less than three weeks before his death in 1994, Vazgen I was the first national figure who was awarded the newly created highest honour of the Armenian state, the Order of National Hero.

Realities after independence

The fall of communism and independence of Armenia in 1991 marked the beginning of many unprecedented events in the life of the Armenian nation, both in the Republic of Armenia and the diaspora. Independence has not only radically changed the way the Armenian diaspora – where more Armenians live than in Armenia itself – perceives and understands itself, but has created a 'new' discourse of mobilisation and 'unity', to face the colossal new challenges facing the 'nation'. As a result of post-independence developments and resulting realities, institutional life, both in Armenia and the diaspora, has changed and continues to unfold. While the Armenian Apostolic Church, especially since the election of the current Catholicos in 1999, has flourished internally – with the building of new churches, seminaries, charitable institutions and so on – the Church has virtually had no functional role in the transitional processes of the last decade in Armenia and the diaspora concerning how the country and state have been shaped over the last twenty years.³⁶

In the face of rampant corruption, social and economic inequalities, a lack of basic legal protection and other state-induced difficulties in post-Soviet Armenia, the 'moral guidance' and 'spiritual anchor' that society expected from the Church and her hierarchy was not provided. Although the Church is respected as a historically significant national institution, its establishment and the clergy remain on the periphery of the country's spiritual life. For instance, a survey of 1,875 people around Armenia found that 60 per cent of respondents 'did not know any clergy'. Of those who did, 20 per cent had a negative impression, 35 per cent a positive impression and 43 per cent were neutral.³⁷ Interestingly, when intellectuals in Armenia were asked 'which component [of religion] prevails in the average Armenian's worldview?' they replied: 34 per cent Christian, 32 per cent pagan, 24 per cent atheistic.³⁸ Over 90 per cent of the population consider themselves Christian, yet only 8 per cent attend church services at least once a week.³⁹ Admittedly, the consequences of decades of state-sponsored atheism in Soviet Armenia and the effects of secularisation and globalisation – or what Catholicos Garegin II has called the modern culture of 'encouraged consumerism, decline of moral values, [and] self-centredness' – have had their impact on society.⁴⁰ As the authors of this study stated, 'The situation in Armenia proper is still influenced by 70 years

of anti-church propaganda. For many in Armenia, a well-educated Christian is a contradiction in terms. Religious faith is seen as incompatible with reason, knowledge, science and education.⁴¹

In the global context, the decline of organised religion and institutionalised church life, especially in the West, has been gradual and significant over the last few decades. Yet the implications of this for the Armenian Church have hardly been studied or investigated. Until now, the Church hierarchy, as with many other churches, has not been able to discern or articulate a role or function for the Church in an ever changing, globalised world. Rather than creating a new religious and spiritual discourse ('mission'), Church leaders have found 'comfort' in the reiteration of past glories and achievements in Armenian history. A vivid example of this was the celebrations of the 1,700th anniversary of the adoption of Christianity as the state religion in Armenia, where the past was highlighted and glorified, but without clear connection or relevance to the present or the future.

The challenges facing the Armenian Church and its hierarchy in the twenty-first century are many and varied, from the desired 're-evangelisation' of the country after seventy years of communism, to the training of a new cadre of priests and church workers, to restoration of churches, the 'fight' against new religious movements and the situation of Armenian Church communities in the Middle East.

Challenges in the twenty-first century

Relevance to society

Once the initial euphoria of religious freedom faded, the transition from decades of 'ungodliness' under communism to 'knowledge of God' in a newly independent country proved to be more complex, problematic and difficult. For instance, on the individual level, reclaiming Armenian religion, vis-à-vis the national Church, became one of the means to assert the newly found freedoms of the country after the end of the USSR. Indeed, in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, it was fashionable to be baptised and become a 'believer', virtually overnight. However, neither society nor the religious establishment was prepared to accept the unexpected realities of freedom and liberty. This includes not only the ethical and moral guidance that was expected of the Church leadership, but after decades of atheism the critical issues of 're-evangelisation' of the population – as Catholicos Karekin I characterised it – the lack of a cadre of clergy who are adequately educated and trained and the non-existence of church communities or parishes around which church life could be organised in towns, cities and regions of Armenia.⁴²

After the end of communism, society in Armenia, as in other post-Soviet countries, expected the Church to provide much-needed moral leadership in filling the ideological and spiritual gap left behind by the failure of Soviet ideology. In 1991, as one priest described it: 'The responsibility to give shape and

content to this [national and spiritual] awakening, together with its present and future direction, [had] fallen on the shoulders of the Armenian clergy.⁴³ Nevertheless, the Church was neither prepared nor had the capacity to deal with such an enormous challenge. After decades of pressure and restrictions, the Church was ill prepared, both in terms of human and material resources, to provide leadership and a response to the growing interest of people in religion, church and spirituality. ‘We never anticipated that the freedom of religion that was granted would create such a situation for which we were certainly not prepared’, admitted Catholicos Vazgen in 1992.⁴⁴

This challenge was compounded – and continues to be complex – by the reality that, just as in Western Europe, for instance, allegiance to the ‘mother church’ is only nominal as part of one’s culture or national identity and not necessarily an expression of deep religious belief. Indeed, once the initial excitement over religious freedom in Armenia wore out by the early 1990s, it became obvious that the Armenian Church’s impact on individual religiosity in Armenia was and is minimal. Meanwhile, immediately after independence, the Church preoccupied itself with establishing its pre-Soviet status and reclaiming its legitimacy as a national institution, which, ironically, it already had. Other Armenian denominations – such as the small Catholic and Evangelical churches – and alternative religious groups engaged in the ‘re-evangelisation’ of the country.⁴⁵ While multi-level transitions were (and are) taking place, the Church has remained on the periphery of both national life and society.

Twenty years after independence, society still faces an endemic culture of corruption, socio-economic hardships, political turmoil and ideological disappointment. However, the national Church has not been able to provide the expected moral, ethical and spiritual guidance to society. In fact, even on issues where the Church has traditionally had clear theological positions, such as abortion or domestic violence, the official Church has been publicly silent. When asked about such matters, Karekin II, former Catholicos of Cilicia said: ‘We don’t impose on our followers dogmatic principles on practical issues such as abortion or homosexuality. We have not come up with any official declaration or statement on this or that social issue, although, conceivably, we might give certain “directives” or recommendations.’⁴⁶ While such moral issues are left to personal choice, the Church leadership has not publicly spoken about corruption or state-inflicted injustice in the country, matters that have affected the daily lives of the public since independence.

The legacy of long decades of communism has arguably had the greatest impact on theological education and the training of priests in seminaries. More than any other aspect of the country’s recent history, this has had long-term implications for the functioning of the Church not only during Soviet times, but even twenty years after independence. The lack of a critical number of well-educated clergy, with a well-rounded theological, biblical, philosophical and pastoral education, is a major problem facing the Church. This lack has a dire effect on the Church’s intellectual engagement with society. The low standard of theological education under Communism

was due to several critical reasons. Not only was theological scholarship officially forbidden or at least discouraged, it was virtually impossible to train an indigenous cadre of theologians in Armenia. Under the strict Soviet rule, the standards of clergy education were determined by the functional needs of the Church. As such, the criteria for graduation from seminary were knowledge of the liturgical practices of the Armenian Church and some general knowledge of the Scriptures and church history. Indeed, over the Soviet decades, the Church had increasingly retreated into a 'cultural ministry' and came to see its primary role as the preserver of Armenian national identity. This greatly affected the Church's 'religious mission'. The lack of qualified teaching staff, textbooks in Armenian for theological and biblical subjects, adequate libraries or research resources compound this critical problem.⁴⁷ In recent years, Catholicos **Garegin** II has spent considerable energy and financial resources on improving theological education and training clergy.⁴⁸ While he has increased the number of clergy in Armenia nearly tenfold over the last decade or so, their impact on society in general and the formation of church communities (parishes) in particular remains to be seen.

Church–state relations

As in many other post-communist countries, the relationship of the Church with the state has been highly controversial and complex over the last two decades. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, there was an expectation that the Church would finally be free of state control and influence in an independent Armenia. Yet, while constitutionally church and state are separate, the Church has sought the patronage of the state – especially through legislation – to fend off the challenge and competition posed by other denominations, alternative religious movements and foreign missionaries. For instance, the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia (as amended in 2005), while guaranteeing freedom and practice of religion, 'recognizes the exclusive historical mission of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church as a national church, in the spiritual life, development of the national culture and preservation of the national identity of the people of Armenia'.⁴⁹ In turn, successive governments have exploited their relations with the Church and the hierarchy to boost their own legitimacy, especially after unfair elections, and to augment their declining popularity in the diaspora.

Over the last two decades, the Armenian Law on Religion and Freedom of Conscience has provided exclusive privileges to the Armenian Apostolic Church to the dismay of other religious groups and advocates of pluralism and democracy. Indeed, in a 2009 legal opinion poll on religious law in Armenia, the European Commission for Democracy through Law (known as the Venice Commission) – an advisory body on constitutional matters established by the Council of Europe in 1990, which plays a leading role in the adoption of constitutions to make sure they conform to European standards – expressed concern that while 'the acknowledgement in Armenian law

of the special historical role' of the Armenian Apostolic Church is 'not *per se* impermissible, [it] should not be allowed to lead to or serve as the basis of discrimination against other religious communities that may not have the same kind of special status'. It emphasised that 'there is particular need to protect pluralism in religion which is an important element of democracy'.⁵⁰ The Venice Commission had prepared the legal opinion poll upon the request of the Armenian government, to make sure its laws conform to international standards. Nevertheless, the practical effects of such legislation have caused discrimination, which has put the state in an uneasy position vis-à-vis human rights guarantees and international obligations.

The government and the state apparatus were also instrumental in influencing the election of the head of the Armenian Church in 1995 and 1999 by making sure that a candidate favourable to the government was elected as Catholicos. On the eve of the election for a new Catholicos in 1995, when asked about the role of the Church in independent Armenia, President Ter Petrossian explained:

It is true that along with the restoration of Armenian statehood, the church was relieved of its secular obligations. However, as long as a considerable number of Armenians live abroad, the church will preserve its role of uniting the Armenian people. The activities of the church in the nation's spiritual and moral education should not be underestimated.⁵¹

In the same interview, Ter Petrossian openly endorsed the candidacy of Catholicos Karekin II (Sarkissian) of the Great House of Cilicia, who was elected Catholicos of All Armenians by the National Ecclesiastical Assembly made up of 430 delegates from 32 countries (74 per cent lay and 26 per cent clergy), representing over 8.5 million Armenians living in Armenia, Karabakh and around the world. Karekin I served for a short period of four years until 1999.⁵²

Following the untimely death of Karekin I from cancer, the search for a new candidate focused on the question of whether the next Catholicos should be a native of Armenia ('an insider') or a diasporan ('an outsider'). The Church establishment in Armenia, with its own cronyism, preferred continuity of the 'status quo' without major changes. The diaspora, in turn, had its own few candidates and felt the 'inside-outside' debate was offensive. A group of archbishops – including the Patriarchs of Jerusalem and Istanbul – publicly complained that the government of then President Robert Kocharian was unduly interfering in the election process.⁵³ The government supported the candidacy of Archbishop **Garegin** Nercessian, the Vicar of the Pontifical Araratian Diocese in Yerevan, the largest diocese in Armenia, who had considerable support among the clergy and laity in Armenia. Indeed, in the previous election of 1995, Nercessian had received the largest number of votes in the first ballot, higher than Catholicos Karekin of Cilicia. But, under pressure, Nercessian withdrew his candidacy in the third ballot in favour of the candidate endorsed

by President Ter Petrossian. Just as Ter Petrossian had secured the election of his predecessor, the Kocharian government secured Catholicos Garegin II's election in 1999. He was elected by the National Ecclesiastical Assembly, made up of 455 lay and clergy delegates from 43 countries.⁵⁴

The new Catholicos made the formalisation of the Church's relationship with the state one of his top priorities. Shortly after his election, a 'Memorandum of Understanding' between the government of Armenia and the Armenian Church was signed in Ejmiatsin, in March 2000 in the presence of the Catholicos, the Prime Minister and President of the Constitutional Court of Armenia. The Catholicos explained that through this first-ever formal agreement with the Armenian state 'all the spheres of cooperation will be fixed; where the Church and the State will undertake joint efforts directed to the sacred work of strengthening the Motherland and the Church, and creating a happy life for the people'. The Memorandum reiterated 'the importance of the undeniable role and the significance of the Holy Armenian Apostolic Church in the further development and strengthening of Armenian statehood'. It had the 'intention of better clarification of the essence of the relationship between the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church'. Most notably, the sides agreed to (a) further improve and develop regulations governing the relationship of the state and the Armenian Apostolic Church; (b) further '[c]larify the problems related to Church lands and properties; (c) define 'certain tax privileges' for the Church and 'its traditional organisations'; (d) clarify the Church's role in state ceremonies and protocol; (e) recognise 'the importance of the role and significance' of the Church 'in national educational-cultural, social security, health and spiritual spheres'; (f) acknowledge the priority of the Church's 'history, dogmatic preaching and education by the state mass media and during other state activities'; and (g) establish Armenian Church chaplaincies in the Army and prisons.⁵⁵ All subsequent amendments to the Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religion in Armenia were 'informed' by the intent and spirit of the Memorandum of Understanding, which became the 'Law on the Relationship between the Republic of Armenia and the Holy Apostolic Church of Armenia', signed by the President on 14 March 2007.⁵⁶

Following Armenia's independence, the Church heavily lobbied and was instrumental in the drafting of the 1991 Law on Religious Organisations in Armenia, in which the Armenian Church is given certain privileges and declared the 'National Church' of Armenians.⁵⁷ Subsequent amendments further solidified the special status of the Armenian Church. For instance, the state 'shall not obstruct the realisation of the following missions that are the monopoly of the National Church', such as, 'to preach and spread its faith freely throughout the Republic of Armenia. The official coverage of the religious practice of the Armenian Apostolic Church by the mass media or in mass events may be carried out only with the consent of the Armenian Apostolic Church.' The Helsinki Committee of Armenia, a human rights group which has carried out an extensive study of freedom of religion in Armenia, reports

that such ‘monopolies contradict the Republic of Armenia’s Constitution, the Law, and various other laws and legal acts’ of Armenia.⁵⁸

As noted by local and international observers, the current law on religion makes it more difficult for non-apostolic denominations and religious groups to register and function in Armenia. Collaboration for Democracy, an NGO in Armenia, in an analytical report on the development of the law since Armenia’s independence, asserted: ‘It seems that [new] amendments to the Law which had to eliminate the Law’s [previous] shortcomings and controversies, instead made the Law more confusing than it was.’⁵⁹

Even as there was ‘sympathy’ in the early 1990s to give the Armenian Church certain privileges so that she may recover from decades of communism, in at least the last ten years, special privileges granted to the Church have come under criticism by local human rights organisations. Indeed, the ‘chances’ given to the Church in the early years of independence to recover herself have now become controversial privileges and rights written into law.⁶⁰

Meanwhile, the Armenian state’s imprecise and, at times, contradictory laws on religion have made other established religious groups more anxious that they are not seen as equal under the law. As Pope John Paul II told Armenia’s ambassador to the Vatican in 1995:

It is not the [Catholic] Church’s desire that she should enjoy special privileges from the Armenian Government, but that she should enjoy the freedom to act, according to the Gospel mandate which has been given her. This involves the freedom to organize herself at the local and national levels in order better to meet the spiritual needs of the Catholic faithful and to be able to extend compassion and help where required.⁶¹

Regarding the more recent draft law on religion, the Venice Commission in its report requested by the government of Armenia, notes that:

It should be borne in mind that, as emphasized by the U.N. Human Rights Committee, ‘The fact that a religion is recognized as a state religion or that it is established as official or traditional or that its followers comprise the majority of the population, shall not result in any impairment of the enjoyment of any of the rights under the Covenant [ICCPR] ... nor in any discrimination against adherents of other religions or non-believers.’⁶²

However, limitations on the activities of other denominations are not confined to the legal sphere. Catholicos Garegin II was blunt about his dissatisfaction with, for example, the Armenian Evangelical Church in Armenia. He said in an interview:

It is regrettable for us to note that the relationship [between the Armenian Church and the Armenian Evangelical Church] is not in good condition,

because of the missionary activities of the Armenian Evangelical Church. ... We would understand missionary work if it were carried out in a place of unbelief, where there is no Christian faith. And it is unforgivable and condemnable when you come and preach to a child of the Armenian Apostolic Church, to turn him a follower of the Armenian Evangelical Church. This is, indeed, the incorrect understanding of missionary work.⁶³

Indeed, the development of church–state relations in Armenia over the last two decades has been favourable to the Church, especially since the election of Catholicos Garegin II in 1999. For the Catholicos, the primary position of the Armenian Church, above other denominations, is very clear:

The Armenian Church is the basic anchor of Armenian identity and its preservation. This formulation is clearly written in the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia. The Church is a National Church; the Church has walked with this people for 1700 years, the Church has taught and educated her children, has shaped its value system, its character and identity. And today [the Church] continues this divine mission.⁶⁴

Catholicos Garegin II has been quite successful in negotiating with the state the return of churches and properties confiscated during the Soviet period – some 150 churches and religious buildings have already been returned to the Church. This is a vast improvement on a handful of church buildings in Soviet times.⁶⁵ Many churches and monasteries have been renovated. ‘The church did the impossible’, said Garegin II. ‘In a very brief period we trained hundreds of teachers, established new educational and theological institutions, and sponsored youth work.’ But he was also aware of the enormous amount of work ahead: ‘All that we did is really nothing in view of the huge needs that still exist in the country.’⁶⁶

The Church and the diaspora

Beyond the Republic of Armenia, for centuries the Armenian Apostolic Church has been of significance to Armenian communities dispersed throughout the world. Today more Armenians live in the diaspora than in the Republic of Armenia. The largest communities are in the Russian Federation (about 2 million); the United States (1.2 million); Europe (600,000); and the Middle East (350,000). The Catholicosate of All Armenians, recognised as the ‘pre-eminent’ or ‘Mother’ See in the Armenian Church, has dioceses and church communities in over thirty countries. The largest dioceses are in the Russian Federation and the United States. Furthermore, it is historically, politically and sociologically significant that three of the four Hierarchical Sees of the Armenian Apostolic Church are located in the diaspora, in the Middle East: the Catholicosate of Cilicia in Antelias, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and

the Patriarchate of Constantinople in Istanbul. These Hierarchical Sees have their respective monastic brotherhoods, dioceses and church communities in their regions and beyond.

The Armenian Church faces a wide range of challenges in the diaspora as communities in various continents and countries live under various political, cultural, social and economic conditions. For instance, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the communities in the Middle East face a host of critical internal and external issues. Internally, the questions of integration, assimilation, preservation and maintenance of community institutions are among the most hotly debated issues from Beirut to Aleppo, to Cairo, Tehran and Istanbul. Externally, the security situation and ongoing conflicts, religious fundamentalism in recent years, the state-constructed and state-tolerated 'othering' of minorities and socio-economic conditions have caused the mass emigration of Christians in general and Armenians in particular.⁶⁷ In the West, the Church faces internal and external challenges. Internally, the Church needs to address the expectations and needs of third- and fourth-generation Armenians in Europe and North America, for instance. Externally, the biggest challenges for the Church are ideological and socio-cultural trends, especially secularism, atheism and liberalism in society.

In the twenty-first century, connecting with new generations of Armenians growing up around the globe is perhaps the biggest challenge to the Church. What is the relevance of a 1,700-year-old Church to Armenians living in a global society today, in a 'modern' world characterised by expectations of instant gratification, constant stimulation and entertainment? What is the relevance of a Church in the 'information age', where a new social-economic 'lexicon' dominates contemporary thinking? It is a world where 'Facebook', 'Twitter', 'iCloud' are more familiar concepts than 'Holy Trinity', 'salvation', 'sin', 'repentance' or 'obedience'. This challenge, of course, is not unique to the Armenian Church. But what is unique to the Armenian Church is the fact that while it is small in relation to other churches, it is a global church as there are Armenians in over 100 countries.

Another long-term issue for the Church's relationship with communities in the diaspora is the changing demographic of clergy. The diaspora is not producing native-born clergy and relies on Ejjmiatsin to provide parish priests and diocesan bishops. Neither Ejjmiatsin nor the Church as a whole has seriously addressed this issue, which has a lasting impact on its mission and viability in the diaspora. Just as the lack of a sufficient number of well-trained clergy is affecting the Church's engagement with society, in the diaspora the need for qualified priests and lay church workers is even more dire and urgent. While it might take decades to mitigate this problem, the hierarchy neither in Armenia nor in the Diaspora has seriously assessed the implications of this deficiency in the coming years.

Finally, the long conflict between the Catholicosate of All Armenians in Ejjmiatsin and the Catholicosate of Cilicia in Antelias, Lebanon is a major wound in the history of the Armenian Church in the diaspora.⁶⁸ During the Cold War, the administrative schism in the Church took on a political slant,

whereby the Catholicos in Ejmiatsin became known as ‘pro-Soviet’ and that in Antelias was ‘anti-Soviet’. At that time the Catholicosate of Cilicia had come under the influence of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) – a nationalist party (founded in 1890), which was involved in anti-Soviet politics in Lebanon in the 1950s. With this background, the Cilician See stepped out of its historically recognised ecclesiastical boundaries (Syria, Lebanon, Cyprus) and established counter-dioceses in the United States, Iran and Greece, thus putting the ‘division’ in the Church on a jurisdictional level. This diocesan, jurisdictional and highly politicised dispute is the longest unresolved problem in the Church. It remains to be seen whether the Armenian Church will be able to liberate herself from the influence of political parties in the diaspora, namely ARF and its affiliates, and resolve her internal and anachronistic disputes to clear the way for a new mission for the twenty-first century.

Conclusion

Against the background of a century of military, political, socio-economic and ideological turmoil and transformational events, the Armenian Church’s hierarchy entered the twenty-first century with a hazy concept for the future, both in terms of their mission in the coming years and in terms of the fundamental basis of church–community relations. Internal and external challenges presented to the Church and its hierarchy require visionary leadership and not mere management of existing affairs. Continuous study, discernment and learned understanding of the ‘flock’ and its needs are the most important requirements for the articulation and implementation of a clear mission and direction in the twenty-first century. In a global age, the expectations of a ‘global church’ are many and varied, the least of which are serious internal reforms and transparency, a clear understanding of its mission and intellectual engagement with the laity. These critical questions will continue to challenge the Church hierarchy for many decades to come.

Annexe

1 Religious leaders

Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians

- Vazgen I (Paljian) (1908–94), in office 1955–94
- Karekin I (**Sarkissian**) (1932–99), in office 1995–9
- Karekin II (Garegin Nersisyan) (1951–), in office 1999–.

Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia (Lebanon)

- Karekin I (**Sarkissian**) (1932–99), in office 1977–94
- Aram I (Keshishian) (1947–), in office 1995–.

488 *Hratch Tchilingirian*

Patriarch of Jerusalem

- Torkom II (Manoogian) (1919–2012), in office 1990–2012.

Patriarch of Constantinople

- Mesrob II (Mutafyan) (1956–), in office 1998–.

2 *Biography*

Title: Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians.

Catholicos Karekin II (Garegin Nersisyan) was born in Voskehat, Armenia on 21 August 1951. He studied at the seminary of the Catholicosate of All Armenians in Ejmiatsin from 1965 to 1971, as well as in Germany and Russia. After graduation, he was ordained a celibate priest in 1972 and took monastic vows. He was consecrated a bishop in 1983 by Catholicos Vazken I and served as the Vicar (Primate) of the Pontifical Diocese of Ararat, the largest diocese in Armenia headquartered in the capital Yerevan. He was made an archbishop in 1988. He was elected 132nd Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians by the National Ecclesiastical Assembly, the highest body in the Church made up of clergy and lay delegates from Armenia and the diaspora, on 27 October 1999 and was consecrated as Catholicos on 4 November 1999. Since his election he has planned and organised major building projects in Ejmiatsin to serve the growing needs of the Church and has paid particular attention to the education and training of priests. Under his leadership the number of seminarians and ordained priests has increased some tenfold. Unlike his predecessors, he pays frequent pastoral and working visits to Armenian church communities in the diaspora, especially in countries where large numbers of Armenians have settled, such as Russia and the United States.

Title: Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia (Lebanon).

Catholicos Aram I (Keshishian) was born in Beirut, Lebanon in 1947. He studied at the seminary of the Catholicosate of Cilicia in Antelias and was educated at the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey (Geneva), the Near East School of Theology (Beirut), and the American University of Beirut. He received a PhD from Fordham University (New York), specialising in philosophy, systematic theology and Near Eastern church history. He was ordained a celibate priest in 1968 and became an archimandrite in 1970. At the height of the Lebanese Civil War, in 1979 he was elected to the challenging position of Primate of the Armenian Community in Lebanon and became a bishop in 1980. He was elected Catholicos of Cilicia in June 1995 by the Electoral Assembly of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia (35 clergy and 115 lay representatives), and was consecrated a week later. Beyond the Armenian Church, Aram I is well known as an active ecumenical leader. He has been involved with the World

Council of Churches since the early 1970s; he was elected its Moderator in 1991 and unanimously re-elected for a second term in 1998. He is a founding member of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), as well as a host of ecumenical bodies, including the Oriental Orthodox–Eastern Orthodox Theological Dialogue, Oriental Orthodox–Reformed Theological Dialogue, the Orthodox–Evangelical Dialogue, the Oriental Orthodox–Roman Catholic and Oriental Orthodox–Lutheran Theological Dialogues. Author of numerous books and publications, Aram is actively engaged in inter-religious dialogue, especially Christian–Islam dialogue in the context of the Middle East.

Title: Patriarch of Jerusalem.

Patriarch Torkom II (Manoogian) was born on 16 February 1919 in an Armenian refugee camp near Baghdad. His parents had escaped the genocide of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. He studied in the seminary of the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem and was educated in the United States. He was ordained a celibate priest in 1939 and held a number of positions in the Patriarchate until 1946, when he was sent to the United States to serve as the pastor of the Armenian Church in Philadelphia. In 1962 he was elected Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of America located in Los Angeles. He was consecrated a bishop the same year in Holy Ejmiatsin. In 1966 he was elected Primate of the Eastern Diocese in the United States, headquartered in New York City, and served for twenty-four years, having been elected for six consecutive terms. He was elected 96th Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem on 22 March 1990 by the Conclave of the Brotherhood (monastic order) of the Patriarchate. Upon the demise of Catholicos Vazken I in August 1994, Patriarch Torkom was elected *locum tenens* in Ejmiatsin. His main responsibility was to organise the election of the new Catholicos and run the affairs of the Holy See until a new head was enthroned in April 1995. Archbishop Torkom was an expert of liturgical and ethnic music, a poet and a writer. He authored some two dozen books and publications, including poetry under the pen name ‘Shen Mah’ and translated 154 sonnets of William Shakespeare into Armenian. He passed away at the age of ninety-three on 12 October 2012 after a long illness. A *locum tenens* (Archbishop Aris Shirvanian) was elected to prepare for a successor.

Title: Patriarch of Constantinople.

Patriarch Mesrob II (Mutafyan). Since July 2008 he has been incapacitated, suffering from a rare kind of Alzheimer’s disease. While he officially remains Patriarch, a lifetime position, patriarchal duties are carried out by a Vicar (Archbishop Aram Ateshian) elected by the all-clergy Religious Council of the Patriarchate. Archbishop Mesrob was born in Istanbul, Turkey on 16 June 1956. Upon completing his elementary education at the local Yessayan Armenian school, he attend Stuttgart American High School in Germany. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Memphis, TN, in sociology and continued his studies in Old Testament studies and

archaeology at the Hebrew University and the American Biblical Institute in Jerusalem. He was ordained a celibate priest in 1979 and a bishop in 1986. He held a number of positions in the Patriarchate and was the archbishop of the Princes Islands. On 14 October 1998 the General Assembly of the Armenian Church Community in Turkey – made up of ten clergy and seventy-nine lay delegates representing 15,800 church members from Istanbul, Kayseri, Diyarbakir, Iskenderun, Kirikhan and Vakifkoy – elected Archbishop Mesrob, forty-two years old at the time, as the 84th Patriarch of Istanbul and All of Turkey.

3 *Theological publications*⁶⁹

- *Ejmiatsin* [Journal of the Catholicosate of All Armenians]
- *Hask* [Journal of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia]
- *Sion* [Journal of the Patriarch of Jerusalem]
- *Shoghakat* [Journal of the Patriarchate of Constantinople].

4 *Congregations*

*Structure of the Church:*⁷⁰ 52 dioceses (Ejmiatsin 39; Cilicia 13); 500 parishes and churches (estimate). The most important and largest dioceses are: the Araratian Diocese (headquartered in Yerevan, capital of Armenia); the Diocese of Russia and New Nakhichevan (headquartered in Moscow); Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (headquartered in New York); and Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (headquartered in Los Angeles).

*Number of clergy:*⁷¹ 77 bishops and archbishops; 130 celibate priests (monks); 500 married priests (estimate). There are Armenian dioceses (headed by a bishop) and church communities (headed by a pastor or a visiting priest) in the following countries: Argentina (diocese); Australia (diocese); Austria (church community); Belgium (church community); Brazil (diocese); Bulgaria (diocese); Canada (diocese); Egypt (diocese); Ethiopia (church community); France (3 dioceses); Georgia (diocese); Germany (diocese); Greece (diocese); Hungary (church community); India (church community); Iraq (diocese); Italy (church community); Netherlands (church community); Romania (diocese); Russia (2 dioceses); South Africa (church community); Sudan (church community); Sweden (church community); Switzerland (diocese); UK (diocese); Ukraine (diocese); Uruguay (diocese); USA (2 dioceses). Cyprus (diocese), Iran (diocese), Lebanon (diocese), Syria (diocese), Kuwait (church community), and United Arab Emirates (church communities) are under the jurisdiction of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia (Lebanon). Israel/Palestine and Jordan are under the jurisdiction of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem; Turkey is under the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

5 Population⁷²

Armenia's population is 3.2 million; ethnicity: Armenian 96 per cent, Yezidi (Kurd) 1.3 per cent, Russian 0.5 per cent, others (includes Assyrians, Greeks, Ukrainians, Jews). Religious affiliation: Armenian Apostolic 94.7 per cent, other Christian 4 per cent (includes Armenian Catholics, Armenian Evangelicals and other smaller Protestant communities), Yezidi (monotheist with elements of nature worship) 1.3 per cent. In addition, there are an estimated 5 million Armenians living around the world, in the diaspora. The largest communities are in Russia and the United States.

Notes

- 1 Noubar Seropian, 'Bats namak Garegin B. Amenayn Hayots Katoghikosin' [Open Letter to Garegin II Catholicos of All Armenians], *Nor Haratch* [New Forward], 5 November 2011, pp. 4–5.
- 2 Armenian Apostolic 94.7 per cent, other Christian 4 per cent. *CIA World Factbook*, Armenia. <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/am.html>, 9 August 2005; World Bank Development Indicators, http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators?cid=GPD_WDI (accessed 17 December 2011).
- 3 During tsarist and Soviet times, the Church in Armenia used the term 'Armenian Apostolic Church' or 'Armenian Apostolic Holy Church' to distinguish itself and emphasise its independence from the Russian Orthodox Church. The full name of the Church as 'Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church' is indicated, for instance, on the liturgical books of the Church, such as *The Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Orthodox Church*, 3rd edn, Jerusalem: Armenian Convent Printing Press, 1958; and *Sharaknots* [Hymnal], Jerusalem: St James Press, 1936. Indeed, the Catholicosate of Cilicia, one of the four Hierarchical Sees, uses the term 'Armenian Orthodox Church' as its formal title; see <http://www.armenianorthodoxchurch.org/> (accessed 17 January 2012).
- 4 There are also Armenian Catholic and Protestant churches, Russian Orthodox (14,600), Assyrian (3,400) and Jewish (300) communities. The Yezidis, numbering 40,620 people, are the second largest ethnic-religious group in the country. Republic of Armenia, Census 2001, Table 5.1. <http://docs.armstat.am/census/pdf/51.pdf> (accessed 17 January 2012). According to the 2001 census, Armenia's total population is 3,213,011. In addition to the groups mentioned, there are also other ethnicities: Greeks (1,176), Ukrainian (1,633) and Kurds (1,519).
- 5 There are a number of groups following old pagan rituals. Eduard Enfiajian, a political commentator and member of the pagan community, explains: 'In Armenia, many people identify religion with the Church establishment. Not us. We have nothing against Christianity, but as a social institution, it is not acceptable to us. Religion is constitutionally separated from the State, but in reality, they teach Christianity even in kindergartens, not to mention schools, universities and the armed forces. To me, this is wrong; a person should be able to choose which God he will obey.' See Karine Ter-Saakian, 'Armenia: Pagan Games', *IWPR Caucasus Reporting Service* (online), 19 August, 2004; <http://iwpr.net/report-news/armenia-pagan-games> (accessed 7 November 2012).
- 6 For more on the Armenian Apostolic Church see Malachia Ormanian, *The Church of Armenia*, New York: St. Vartan Press, 1988; Tiran Nersoyan, *Armenian Church Historical Studies. Matters of Doctrine and Administration*, New York: St. Vartan Press, 1996; Krikor Maksoudian, *Frequently Asked Questions about the Armenian Church*, Burbank, CA: Western Diocesan Press, 2010; Hratch Tchilingirian, *The*

Armenian Church. A Brief Introduction, Burbank, CA: Western Diocese of the Armenian Church, 2008; Hratch Tchilingirian, 'The Catholicos and the Hierarchical Sees of the Armenian Church' in Anthony O'Mahony (ed.) *Eastern Christianity. Studies in Modern History, Religion and Politics*, London: Melisende, 2004, pp. 140–59; during the Soviet period: Claire Mouradian, *De Staline à Gorbatchev, histoire d'une république soviétique, l'Arménie*, Paris: Ramsay, 1990; Stepan Stepanyants, *Hay arakelakan yekeghetsin Stalinyan brnapetutyun orok* [The Armenian Apostolic Church in the Days of Stalinist Domination], Yerevan: Abolon, 1994; Stepan Kertogh (Stepanyants), *Girg Tarapelots. 1920–1950 akan dvakanneri brnutiunneri zoh Hay hogevorakanner* [Book of Suffering: Armenian Clergy Who Were Victims of the 1920–1950 Persecutions], Yerevan: Mughni Press, 2002; Felix Corley, 'The Armenian Church under the Soviet Regime, Part 1: The Leadership of Kevork', *Religion, State and Society*, 1996, 24 (1), 5–53; Felix Corley, 'The Armenian Church under the Soviet Regime, Part 2: The Leadership of Vazgen', *Religion, State and Society*, 1996, 24 (4), 289–343; Felix Corley, 'The Armenian Church under the Soviet and Independent Regimes, Part 3: The Leadership of Vazgen', *Religion, State and Society*, 1998, 26 (3/4), 291–355; Arusiak Terchanyan, *Hay Aragelakan Yekeghetsin Yerkrort Hamashkharayin Paterazmi Tarinerin (1939–1945)* [The Armenian Apostolic Church During Second World War Years (1939–1945)], Yerevan: Nor Gyank Institute, 2001.

- 7 Although 301 has been traditionally accepted to be the date of conversion, critical studies have shown that 314 is the actual date; see, for example, Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan, *Armenian Church Historical Studies. Matters of Doctrine and Administration*, New York: St. Vartan Press, 1996, pp. 63ff. For critical studies on the subject, see Gérard Garitte, *Documents pour l'étude du Livre d'Agathange*, Vatican City: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1946; Poghos Ananian, *Surb Grigor Lusaworch'i dzernadrut'ean t'uakane ew paraganere* [The Date and Circumstances of the Ordination of St. Gregory], Venice: Mkhitarist Press, 1960, pp. 167–9; Hakob Manandyan, *K'nnakan t'esut'yun Hay zhoghovrdi patmut'ean* [Critical Survey of the History of the Armenian People], vol. 2, Yerevan, 1957, pp. 114, 127.
- 8 The controversy originated at the Council of Chalcedon in 451, which defined Christ as 'Perfect God and Perfect Man in One Person' and 'confessed to be in *two natures*, without mixture and without change, without separation and without division'. Unlike the formulation at Chalcedon, the Armenian Church's Christology is based on what is known as the Alexandrian school of theology. St Cyril of Alexandria's formula of 'One Nature of the Incarnate Word' is the basis of this Christology. It teaches that at the moment of Christ's Incarnation, divine nature and human nature are united inseparably in a *single* nature, that is, 'in a single person'. Catholicos Karekin I explains: 'The two natures haven't lost their own characteristics or their integrity, but they do not act separately; otherwise, we would have a dualism, and the Incarnation would not have taken place.' See Giovanni Guaïta, *Between Heaven and Earth. A Conversation with His Holiness Karekin I*, New New York: St. Vartan Press, 2000, p. 97. Furthermore, "'One Nature" is never interpreted in the Armenian Christology as a numerical one, but always a united one', adds Abp. Keshishian. 'Second, the term "nature" (Greek *ousia*, Armenian *bnut'yun*) is used in Armenian theological literature in three different senses: (a) as essence, an abstract notion, (b) as substance, a concrete reality, (c) as person. In the context of anti-Chalcedonian Christology "one nature" is used in a sense of "one person" composed of two natures.' See Aram Keshishian, *The Witness of the Armenian Church in a Diaspora Situation*, New York: Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church, 1978, pp. 25–6. The followers of Cyril of Alexandria and those who adopted his formulation became known as *monophysites* (those advocating 'one nature') because they rejected the formulation of Chalcedon on the basis that the Council spoke of *two natures* (*diophysites*). This is why the Armenian and the other Oriental Churches are

- also known as Non-Chalcedonian churches and are sometimes erroneously referred to as Monophysite churches.
- 9 For the text of the Joint Statement see *Window View of the Armenian Church* (quarterly magazine published by the Armenian Church Research and Analysis Group, San Jose, CA), 1991, 2 (3), 21–4. <http://acrag.wordpress.com/1991/08/> (accessed 17 December 2011).
 - 10 While different in ritual, worship style, rites and language, these churches accept only the first three Ecumenical Councils in Christianity: Nicea (325), Constantinople (381) and Ephesus (431).
 - 11 In Armenian history, the Catholicos has also been referred to as *Chief Priest* (*K'ahanayapet*), *Chief Bishop* (*yepiskoposapet*), *Patriarch* (*hayrapet*) but most commonly as *Catholicos of Armenians* (*Kat'olikos Hayoc'*). Starting in the fifteenth century, the Catholicos in Ejmiatsin acquired the title of 'Catholicos of All Armenians' (*Amenayn hayoc'*) to indicate his jurisdiction over new dioceses created in Armenian colonies spread outside Armenia. Subsequently, he also acquired the title 'Supreme Patriarch' (*Cayraguyn Patriark*) in recognition of the 'supremacy' of the 'Mother See' of the Church over the Patriarchates of Jerusalem and Constantinople, as well as the Catholicates of Akhtamar, Gantsasar and Cilicia.
 - 12 For an extensive discussion of this topic see Krikor Maksoudian, *Chosen of God: The Election of the Catholicos of All Armenians from the Fourth Century to the Present*, New York: St. Vartan Press, 1995.
 - 13 For a more extensive discussion, see Tchilingirian, 'The Catholicos'.
 - 14 For a more extensive discussion on the confiscation of Church properties, see Stepanyants, *Hay arakelakan*, p. 61.
 - 15 See *Vaveragr hay yekeghetsu patmutyan* [Documents on the History of the Armenian Church History], vol. 3, compiled by Sandro Behbudyan, Yerevan: State Central Archives, 1996; Kertogh (Stepanyants), *Girg Tarapelots. 1920–1950*, p. 8.
 - 16 For instance, in Soviet Georgia out of twenty-three Armenian churches, only one was left open. Prior to 1917 the large Armenian Church diocese of Russia had forty-four churches, three monasteries and fifty-seven priests; the diocese of Astrakhan had fifty-seven churches and thirty-nine priests; the diocese of Artsakh (Karabakh) had 208 churches, 14 monasteries and 236 priests. See Kertogh (Stepanyants), *Girg Tarapelots. 1920–1950*, p. 7; Terchanyan, *Hay Arakelakan; Soviet War News* (published by the Soviet Embassy in London), 22 August 1941, quoted in Corley 'The Armenian Church under the Soviet Regime, Part 1', p. 11.
 - 17 Corley, 'The Armenian Church under the Soviet Regime, Part 1', p. 9.
 - 18 See Corley, 'The Armenian Church Under the Soviet Regime, Part 1', Corley, 'The Armenian Church under Soviet Regime, Part 2', pp. 289–343; Corley, 'The Armenian Church under the Soviet Regime, Part 3', pp. 291–355; Stepanyants, *Hay arakelakan*; Edward Alexander, 'The Armenian Church in Soviet Policy', *Russian Review*, 1955, 14 (4), 357–62.
 - 19 For an in-depth discussion of the period, see Mouradian, *De Staline à Gorbatchev*; Stepanyants, *Hay arakelakan*; and Terchanyan, *Hay Arakelakan*.
 - 20 Fr Abraham Mrdrtchian, 'Religious Reawakening in Armenia', *Window View of the Armenian Church*, 1991, 2 (2), p. 5; <http://acrag.wordpress.com/1991/06/> (accessed 17 November 2012).
 - 21 Hratch Tchilingirian, 'Edging towards the Big Agreement', *War Report* 34, June 1995, pp. 42–3; Hratch Tchilingirian, 'Karabakh: Internationalising the Enclave', *War Report* 52, June–July 1997, pp. 42–3.
 - 22 Rebroadcast on Armenian radio for Europe, 11 July 1988; Summary of World Broadcasts, Soviet Union – SWB SU/0202 B/1–2, 13 July 1988.
 - 23 Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Soviet Union – FBIS-SOV (Armenpress), 15 July 1988: 59.

- 24 Rebroadcast on Armenian radio for Europe, 11 July 1988; Summary of World Broadcasts, Soviet Union – SWB SU/0202 B/1–2, 13 July 1988.
- 25 Gerard J. Libaridian (ed.), *The Karabagh File*, Cambridge, MA: The Zoryan Institute, 1988, p. 93.
- 26 Keston News Service (KNS), no. 295, 3 March 1988, p. 17. Vazgen's appearance on television followed shortly after dissident Paruir Hairikyan had sent the Catholicos a telegram accusing him of betraying the people's interest.
- 27 Quoted in Corley, 'The Armenian Church under the Soviet and Independent Regimes, Part 3', p. 294. Politburo minutes, 29 February 1988, *Tsentr khraheniya sovremennoi dokumentatsii* (TskhSD), f. 89, op. 42, d. The 'experience' refers to Vazgen's visit to Baku. He said, 'I was in Baku at a reception with [Azerbaijani communist party leader Heidar] Aliev. In Baku there is an Armenian church. Two hundred thousand Armenians or more live in the city. Vazgen asked to hold a service in this church, but for 12 years he's been waiting for an invitation, which he hasn't received. He's an unwelcome figure, they don't want him to turn up there.' Ibid.
- 28 FBIS-SOV (Armenpress), 15 July 1988: 59.
- 29 For an extensive discussion of this period see Mark Malkasian, *Gha-ra-bagh! The Emergence of the National Democratic Movement in Armenia*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996.
- 30 'Address of His Holiness Vazgen to the delegates of the Armenian National Movement', trans. Hratch Tchilingirian, *Window View of the Armenian Church*, 1990, 1 (2), p. 6, <http://acrag.wordpress.com/1990/04/> (accessed 7 November 2012).
- 31 Ibid., pp. 6–9. Curiously, at the conclusion of his address to the ANM, 'in order to encourage the use of the Armenian language in educational and other institutions', Vazgen donated 100 Armenian language typewriters 'under the discretion' of ANM's 'newly elected committee'.
- 32 For an extensive discussion of the Church's political stance in the Soviet period until the mid-1980s see Claire Seda Mouradian, 'The Armenian Apostolic Church', in *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twentieth Century. Christianity under Stress*, Pedro Ramet (ed.), vol. 1, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1988, pp. 353–74.
- 33 'Address of His Holiness Vazgen to the delegates of the Armenian National Movement'.
- 34 *Armenian Reporter*, New York, 19 September 1991.
- 35 On several occasions, Catholicos Vazgen met Azerbaijan's religious leader, Sheik-ul-Islam Allah-Shukur Pashazadeh, in an effort to enhance resolution of the conflict and to underline that the conflict is not religious in nature. They met in May 1988, November 1993 and April 1994.
- 36 Hratch Tchilingirian, 'Celebration of Faith: The Armenian Church celebrates 1700th Anniversary of its Establishment and Adoption of State Religion in Armenia', *Armenian International Magazine (AIM)*, March 2001, 22–4, <http://oxbridgepartners.com/hratch/index.php/publications/articles/121-celebration-of-faith-1700th-anniversary> (accessed 17 December 2011).
- 37 Armenia 2020, 'Church, State and Religion in Armenia', Issue Paper prepared by Arak-29 Foundation, Yerevan, 2003, p. 3. See www.armenia2020.org (accessed 17 January 2012).
- 38 'Value and Ideology Benchmarks: Imperatives and Alternatives', Armenian Center for National and International Studies, Yerevan, July 2004, p. 10 (www.acnis.am) (accessed 17 January 2012).
- 39 Based on World Values 1995–1997 survey. 'Study of Worldwide Rates of Religiosity, Church Attendance', 10 December 1997, University of Michigan; see: umich.edu/~newsinfo/Releases/1997/Dec97/r121097a.html, 23 March 2003 (accessed

- 17 January 2012). In neighbouring Georgia it is 10 per cent and in Azerbaijan 6 per cent.
- 40 'Hayastani kronakan mtnolordeh batsahaytogh garg meh hartser' [A Number of Issues that Shed Light on the Religious Atmosphere in Armenia], Part A, *Nor Haratch*, Paris, 1 October 2011, p. 4.
- 41 Armenia 2020, 'Church, State and Religion in Armenia', p. 1.
- 42 'Reformation' of the Church was another aspect of Catholicos Karekin I's vision: 'The reformation of the Armenian Church should be our goal, our target, our point of departure. That reform should preserve an order that is alive, not an order that is just a structure. We need to reform the church in such a way that she will become an active and positive presence for the benefit of our nation.' See Hratch Tchilingirian, 'The End of a Journey. Karekin I, Catholicos of All Armenians', *Armenian International Magazine (AIM)*, July 1999, 29–33.
- 43 Fr Abraham Mgrditchian, 'Religious Reawakening in Armenia', *Window View of the Armenian Church*, 1991, 2 (2), p. 5.
- 44 Hratch Tchilingirian, 'The Price of Freedom. Conversation with His Holiness Catholicos Vazgen'. *Window View of the Armenian Church*, 1992, 3 (1), p. 7, <http://acrag.wordpress.com/1992/02/> (accessed 3 July 2012).
- 45 Hratch Tchilingirian, 'The Evangelicals in Armenia. On the Road to Pluralism', *Armenian International Magazine (AIM)*, January 2000, 52–3, <http://oxbridgepartners.com/hratch/index.php/publications/articles/103-the-evangelicals-in-armenia-on-the-road-to-pluralism> (accessed 3 July 2012).
- 46 *Armenian International Magazine (AIM)*, March 1994, p. 23.
- 47 For a more detailed discussion of theological education, see Hratch Tchilingirian, 'Late Harvest', *Frontier* (Keston Institute), June–August 1996, 12–14.
- 48 The establishment of a Faculty of Theology at Yerevan State University in 1995 was one such improvement – for the first time in the university's eighty-four-year history. Some fifty students graduate every year. From the mid-1990s there has been a gradual and steady increase of the number of students studying in Ejmiatsin, as well as in the two seminaries established in Sevan and Giumri since independence. Whereas in the late Soviet period the average number at Ejmiatsin was about forty to fifty students a year, in recent years the figure has reached several hundred. This has translated into an increase in the number of ordained priest serving in Armenia.
- 49 Article 8.1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia; for the text of the Constitution, see <http://www.parliament.am/parliament.php?id=constitution&lang=eng#1> (accessed 17 January 2012).
- 50 Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR, 'Joint Opinion on the Draft Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religion and on the Laws making amendments and supplements to the criminal code and the law on the relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Holy Armenian Apostolic Church of the Republic of Armenia', adopted by the Venice Commission at its 88th Plenary Session (Venice, 14–15 October 2011), Opinion 643/2011; CDL-AD (2011) 028. [http://www.venice.coe.int/docs/2011/CDL-AD\(2011\)028-e.pdf](http://www.venice.coe.int/docs/2011/CDL-AD(2011)028-e.pdf). (accessed 17 January 2012).
- 51 *Hayastani Hanrapetutium* [Republic of Armenia], Yerevan, 8 March 1995.
- 52 Figures provided by the Holy See of Ejmiatsin. For more details on the 1995 National Ecclesiastical Assembly, see *Window View of the Armenian Church*, 1995, 5 (1/2), 10–11, <http://acrag.wordpress.com/1995/07/> (accessed 7 November 2012).
- 53 Signed by Archbishops Nerses Bozabalian (of Ejmiatsin), Torkom Manoogian (Jerusalem), Mesrob Mutafyan (Istanbul), Tiran Kyureghian (Moscow), Barkev Martirosian (Karabakh) and Khajag Barsamian (New York). See Barbara J. Merguerian, 'Catholicos Election Divides the Church into Two Opposing Factions. Lack of Effective Leadership Is Striking', *Azgh/Mirror Online*, 10 June 1999.

- 54 For a discussion of the 1999 catholical election, see Hratch Tchilingirian, 'A New Beginning', *Armenian International Magazine (AIM)*, November 1999, 10 (11), 24–5.
- 55 'A Historical Day in the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin', press release, Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, 17 March 2000, posted on groong@usc.edu list (accessed 17 January 2012).
- 56 For the English translation of the law see Helsinki Committee of Armenia, *Freedom of Religion in Armenia. A Study*, Yerevan: Helsinki Committee of Armenia, 2010, pp. 207–9.
- 57 In neighbouring Georgia, too, the Constitution recognises 'the special role' of the Georgian Orthodox Church 'in the history of Georgia and its independence from the state'. See Nikolas K. Gvosdev, 'Is "Symphony" Returning to the Caucasus?', *Orthodox News*, 12 June 2000, 2 (44), http://www.parliament.ge/LEGAL_ACTS/CONSTITUTION/consten.html (accessed 17 January 2012).
- 58 Helsinki Committee of Armenia, *Freedom of Religion in Armenia*, p. 16.
- 59 'Contradictions in the RA Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations', Collaboration for Democracy NGO, 4 February 2005 (<http://www.hra.am/old/eng/index1.php?goto=guest&id=72>) (accessed 17 January 2012).
- 60 Hratch Tchilingirian, 'Church and State in Armenia', *Window View of the Armenian Church*, 1991, 2 (3), 4–6; Hratch Tchilingirian, 'The End of a Journey. Karekin I, Catholicos of All Armenians', *Armenian International Magazine (AIM)*, July 1999, 29–33; Hratch Tchilingirian, 'A New Beginning: Catholicos Garegin II Faces the Task of Healing and Leading the Church', *Armenian International Magazine (AIM)*, November 1999, 24–5.
- 61 Pope John Paul II's English-language address on 25 March 1995 to Armenia's new Ambassador to the Vatican, during the ceremony of presentation of his credentials. *L'Observatore Romano*, 29 March 1995.
- 62 Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR, 'Joint Opinion on the Draft Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religion', pp 7–8.
- 63 'Hayastani kronakan mtnolordeh batsahaytogh garg meh hartser' [A Number of Issues that Shed Light on the Religious Atmosphere in Armenia], Part C, *Nor Haratch*, Paris, 6 October 2011, p. 4.
- 64 *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- 65 In July 2005, during a meeting between Catholicos Garegin II and Prime Minister Andranik Margaryan, the issue of transfer of monastic and church lands to the Church by the state was discussed, as well as 'activities targeted at the further elaboration' of the Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations. *Arka and AI+*, 14 July 2005, posted on groong@usc.edu (accessed 17 January 2012).
- 66 Stephen Brown, 'Armenian Church Faces up to Post-Communist Challenges', *Christianity Today*, 1 March 2001, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2001/marchweb-only/3-5-23.0.html> (accessed 7 November 2012).
- 67 For instance, on the status of Jerusalem and the Armenians, see Hratch Tchilingirian, 'Dividing Jerusalem: Armenians on the Line of Confrontation', *Armenian International Magazine (AIM)*, October 2000, 11 (10), 40–4. Link to article: <http://oxbridgepartners.com/hratch/index.php/publications/articles/117-dividing-jerusalem-armenians-on-the-line-of-confrontation>.
- 68 The schism developed in 1441, when a Church Assembly decided to return the Catholicosate of All Armenians from Cilicia to Ejmiatsin, its original place of foundation. But the incumbent of the see in Sis, Cilicia, Catholicos Grigor Moussapegiants (1439–46), refused to accept the decision of the Church Assembly and travel to Ejmiatsin. Thus, the Assembly elected and installed Kirakos Virapetsi as the new Catholicos in Ejmiatsin. Moussapegiants and his successors perpetuated the Catholicosate of Cilicia in Sis until the First World War, when it was transferred to Lebanon in the 1920s. In 1921, following the genocide of Armenians

in the Ottoman Empire, the Catholicos of Cilicia, along with his clergy and 130,000 surviving Armenians, were evacuated from Cilicia by the French forces and brought to Syria and Lebanon. Armenians in Cilicia had become the victims of a wave of massacres in Kemalist Turkey. Some 300,000 people lost their lives. The last Catholicos of Sis, Sahak II Khabayan (1902–39), relocated and restored the Catholicosate of Cilicia in Antelias, a suburb of Beirut, Lebanon in 1930 (for extensive historical background, see Babgen Gulesserian, *Patmut' iwn kat' olikosac' Kilikioy* [History of Catholicos of Cilicia], Antelias, Lebanon: Catholicate of Cilicia, 1939). Since then cordial relations have been maintained between the Catholicosates of Ejmiatsin and Cilicia. They also participated in the elections of the Catholicos of each respective See, through two representatives – a practice that continues until today. However, in the Cold War period the two sees diverged into adversarial positions thanks to the politics of the times.

- 69 In addition to these official journals, weekly and frequent news, announcements and communiqués are published (in Armenian and English) on the websites of the respective Sees: Catholicosate of All Armenians: <http://www.armenianchurch.org/>; Catholicosate of Cilicia: <http://www.armenianorthodoxchurch.org/>; Patriarchate of Jerusalem: <http://www.armenian-patriarchate.org/>; Patriarchate of Constantinople: <http://www.lraper.org/> (all websites accessed on 17 January 2012).
- 70 *Liturgical Calendar 2012*, Holy Ejmiatsin, pp 236–1; *Liturgical Calendar 2011*, Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia, Antelias, Lebanon, pp. 248–54. *Liturgical Calendar 2011*, Patriarchate of Jerusalem, pp. 130–2; *Liturgical Calendar 2001*, Patriarchate of Constantinople (Istanbul).
- 71 Ibid.
- 72 Based on 2001 census, as provided by the government of Armenia, <http://www.gov.am/en/demographics/>. Other than Armenia, where official censuses are conducted, there are no reliable figures about the exact number of Armenians living in each country around the world. See, for example, <http://www.armeniadiaspora.com/population.html> and http://www.haias.net/news/_armenian-population.html (all websites accessed on 17 January 2012).

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