

**A Historical Study of the Missiological Convictions of the ‘Evangelical Christians and Baptists of Georgia’ and their role in relation to national culture and life**

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**ABSTRACT**

The missiological experience of Georgian Evangelical Christians-Baptists (ECB) has never been studied before and little academic attention has been paid to its life and witness. The thesis aims to analyse which kind of historical, theological and missiological trajectories have contributed to the particular character of the ECB, which gives it the appearance of uniqueness on the global Baptist scene today, and to some extent in the wider church as well. Through tracing a historical progression in the life of the ECB from 1867 to the present day, it argues first for a convergence of historical, social and ecclesial factors which is unique in Eastern Europe. It shows an interaction of Eastern Orthodox, Western Protestant and Molokan traditions in the context of socio-political experiences from the Russian occupation, through the time of the Soviet Union to present independence. Second, it argues that there has been a consistent interaction of mission, culture, and church in the activity of the ECB throughout the period under the investigation. Third, it argues from the ECB case for the essential place in mission of two key but often-neglected elements: liturgy and aesthetics. It shows that while these elements have been accentuated in the period since independence from the Soviet Union, they have a foundation in the early history of the ECB.

Overall, the thesis traces the history and particular character of *Georgian* congregations of Evangelicals and Baptists and their mission, as distinct from treating Baptists in Georgia simply as one branch of the former Soviet All Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists.

The thesis uses primary sources: archival materials, papers, correspondence in Georgian and Russian, German, English. Most of them have never been studied and circulated in academic circles. Some of the key documents have been translated into English and attached to the thesis in appendices.