Evangelical Christian Baptists of Georgia
The History and Transformation of a Free Church Tradition
By Malkhaz Songulashvili

“Unique indeed is this account of the way in which the Baptist community in Georgia has responded in its life, liturgy, and mission to the peculiar context of the Georgian nation, which has been powerfully shaped by the Georgian Orthodox Church. In a work of rich significance for theologians, church historians, and missiologists, Bishop Malkhaz Songulashvili draws attention to the indigenous roots of the Baptist movement in Georgia, its development under both Tsarist and Soviet rule, and its courageous attempts to engage in culturally relevant mission today.”

— John Briggs, Professor Emeritus, the University of Birmingham and former Director, Baptist History and Heritage Centre, Regent’s Park College, University of Oxford

“Evangelical Christian Baptists of Georgia is a truly remarkable and original book. Songulashvili’s skills as a historian and theologian have produced essential reading not just for those interested in the life of Baptists, but for all who are concerned with the Christian church during and after the Soviet era in Eastern Europe.”

— Paul S. Fiddes, Professor of Systematic Theology, University of Oxford and Principal Emeritus, Regent’s Park College, Oxford

“Drawing on a wealth of hitherto unused primary material, Malkhaz Songulashvili recounts the history of the Baptists in Georgia and discusses their sufferings, their dilemmas under Soviet persecution, and their subsequent embracing of Orthodox spirituality and ecclesiology. As a former archbishop of the Evangelical Baptist Church of Georgia, Songulashvili writes with unique authority about this astonishing synthesis of Evangelical activism with Eastern Christianity.”

— David Bebbington, Professor of History, University of Stirling

Malkhaz Songulashvili, former Archbishop of the Evangelical Baptist Church of Georgia (EBCG), provides a pioneering, exacting, and sweeping history of Georgian Baptists. Utilizing archival sources in Georgian, Russian, German, and English—translating many of these crucial documents for the first time into English—he recounts the history of the EBCG from its formation in 1867 to the present.

While the particular story of Georgian Baptists merits telling in its own right, and not simply as a feature of Russian religious life, Songulashvili employs Georgian Baptists as a sustained case study on the convergence of religion and culture. The interaction of Eastern Orthodox, Western Protestant, and Russian dissenting religious traditions—mixed into the political cauldron of Russian occupation of a formerly distinct eastern European culture—led to a remarkable experiment in Christian free-church identity. Evangelical Christian Baptists of Georgia allows readers to peer through the lens of intercultural studies to see the powerful relationships among politics, religion, and culture in the formation of Georgian Baptists, and their blending of Orthodox tradition into Baptist life to craft a unique ecclesiology, liturgy, and aesthetics.

978-1-4813-0110-7
Hardback
521 pages | 6 x 9 | $79.95
September 1, 2015
Subjects: Baptist History

Malkhaz Songulashvili is Associate Professor of Comparative Theology at Ilia State University and Metropolitan Bishop of Tbilisi for the Evangelical Baptist Church of Georgia. Dr. Songulashvili received the 2015 Shahbaz Bhatti Freedom Award, given to a person for his or her outstanding work in promoting religious and minority rights around the globe. He resides in the Georgian capital, Tbilisi.

For a review or examination copy, please e-mail BUP_Marketing@baylor.edu.