

Call for Papers

Special Issue Autumn 2026: *Baptistic Theologies from the Middle East: Identity, Mission, and Practice in Wartime and Post-Conflict Upheaval*

Guest edited by Dr Caleb Hutcherson (ABTS, Lebanon)

Baptists and other free church communities within the Believers' Church tradition in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) live and minister within multireligious societies shaped by long histories of coexistence, as well as political upheaval and recurrent violence. Often small but deeply rooted, these communities bear witness to the gospel alongside Muslim, Orthodox, and Catholic neighbours, forming an ecclesial horizon in which religious diversity is neither new nor exceptional. Yet their witness unfolds within a region marked by war, displacement, systemic injustice, and rapid political reconfiguration — conditions that press theological and ethical questions to the surface.

This special issue of the *Journal of European Baptist Studies* will explore how baptistic identity, mission, and practice are shaped in Middle Eastern wartime and post-conflict contexts. Moving beyond abstract debates about 'just war' or 'pacifism', we invite attention to the lived convictions that take shape amid violence, trauma, and political upheaval. What does it mean to sustain a baptistic community (rooted in commitments to biblicism, liberty, discipleship, community, and mission) when persistence in witness and preservation of life are daily concerns? How do forgiveness and justice hold together in contexts where calls for reconciliation risk obscuring the realities of oppression? And how do communities maintain faithful witness, prophetic truth-telling, and public advocacy when facing sectarianism, nationalism, militant partisanship, or ongoing genocide?

Rather than rehearsing narratives of decline or disappearance that often dominate descriptions of Middle Eastern Christianity, this issue seeks to highlight baptistic theological creativity, courage, and

agency. The experiences of baptistic communities offer fresh insight into the meaning of identity, mission, and practice in times of crisis. By bringing these voices from the MENA region into conversation with wider European and global Baptist scholarship, *JEBs* aims to broaden understanding of what faithful witness looks like in a region again marked by war and violent conflict.

Potential points of focus include:

- Historical and identity-formation studies of baptistic and free church communities in the MENA region, especially in relation to experiences of war, displacement, or political upheaval.
- Theological responses to conflict, including approaches to justice, forgiveness, reconciliation, and truth-telling amid and after violence or occupation.
- Baptistic identity shaped by minority status, sectarian environments, or experiences of marginalization.
- Baptistic ethics and public theology in settings marked by nationalism, systemic injustice, or militantly partisan public spaces.
- Convictional praxis regarding preservation and persistence, including community formation, pastoral care, and everyday faith amid crisis.
- Women's voices and ministries within wartime or post-conflict baptistic communities.
- Worship, embodied practices, and communal life that express hope, resistance, or prophetic presence in times of upheaval.

Peer review

All articles are subject to blind peer review process.

Submissions

We are warmly inviting submissions for this special issue. Please send an abstract (200–300 words that provide a broad summary of the intended article) by email to jebs@ibts.eu by **15 March 2026** or sooner. The editors will then assess the suitability of the topic for *JEBS* by 31 March 2026. Full article submissions that are invited for peer-review should follow *JEBS* formatting guidelines (MHRA style) and be no longer than 7500 words (including footnotes). Full article submissions will be collected until **31 August 2026**.

General information about *JEBS* and instructions for authors are accessible at via the IBTS website:

<<https://www.ibts.eu/research-community/publications>>

Questions

Any further questions about this special issue can be addressed to *JEBS* guest editor:

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