

The aim of the dissertation is to find an answer to the question of whether the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) in the years 1968–1989 could be considered “free” in any way. This work describes the life of the ECCB in that period and the ways of the freedom and unfreedom the ECCB enjoyed and formed. Thereby, the research is based on the careful analysis of documents of church and state archives and the results of ten author-led biographical interviews with then active pastors. Combining these methods and sources, the dissertation offers an innovative view on the ECCB in the period and provides new, deeper, and more personal insights into the processes of the time. The first four chronological chapters describe the situation and development of the ECCB during the socio-political liberalisation during the Prague Spring and during the years after the Warsaw Pact troops’ invasion of Czechoslovakia, when the so-called “normalisation” began. The fifth chapter presents the main strategies that the church developed in reaction to the restriction of its freedom. The sixth chapter presents the perspective of two ministers of the ECCB on their contacts with the representatives of the state authorities in the form of a case study. An insight in the internal life of the church and the forms of the church work is then provided by first part of chapter seven. Subsequently, its second, interpretative part offers an interpretation of the sources of the ECCB’s freedom and an interpretation of the character of the church community. The eighth chapter continues with the chronological description of the church’s reaction to developments of the second half of the eighties, specifically the change of the political system, and outlines the paths of the church and its ministers thereafter. The attachment contains biographical portraits of the ten interviewed ministers.