

Tools of Control or Seeds of Liberation?

Reformed Evangelism and Slavery in the Ante-Bellum American South

by By Iain Whyte

DESCRIPTION:

Examining the history of slavery in the American South, it is impossible to separate the interpretations of Christianity from the arguments and counter-arguments surrounding liberation. In *Tools of Control or Seeds of Liberation*, Iain Whyte considers how this intertwining of ideologies impacted enslaved people and their relationship to religion. Tracing the legacy of the reformed tradition from its enthusiasm for 'instruction for all', to the weakening of views on injustice by slaveholding Christians, Whyte explores in detail the dilemmas, compromises, and self-interest of many Reformed Christians. He considers the essential incompatibility of faith in Jesus with the support of slavery, and how the movement for abolition in the mid-eighteenth century focussed Christians on this question.

In the second half of this book, Whyte concentrates on the voices of enslaved people, recording first-hand experiences of religion and its connection to slavery, exploring how remarkable women such as Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth liberated themselves, and returning to Scotland with Frederick Douglass to consider the Scottish protestant reaction. Whyte's detailed study considers the intertwining of religion and slavery from every angle, and ultimately explores how Christianity could provide the seeds of liberation.

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CONTRIBUTORS BIOGRAPHIES:

Iain Whyte is the Former President of the Scottish Church History Society and Honorary Post Doctoral Fellow, University of Edinburgh for his work in the history of slavery and abolition. He is author of three books and many articles on slavery and abolition including *James Clarke & Co title: Send Back the Money!* (2012).

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