



DETAILS



Ownership

The Evangelical Legacy of Slavery in Edwards, Wesley, and Whitefield

June 18, 2024 | \$18, 240 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-0415-9

The Evangelical Legacy of Slavery

Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, and George Whitefield were the three most prominent early evangelicals—and all three were deeply compromised on the issue of slavery. Edwards and Whitefield both kept slaves themselves, and Wesley failed to speak out against slavery until near the end of his life.

In *Ownership*, Sean McGeever tells the true story of these men's relationships to slavery: a story that has too often been passed over or buried in scholarly literature. In this book McGeever

- Tells the stories of these three fathers of American evangelicalism and their legacies regarding slavery
- Traces their legacies for how American evangelicals would think about slavery for centuries to come, up to the present
- Discusses the clichéd idea of historical figures being “men of their times,” and how to grapple with the complicated stories of our forebears and heroes
- Explores the assumptions about slavery among Christians in the United Kingdom and American colonies in the colonial period

McGeever writes, “The lives of John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, and George Whitefield provide us a wealth of insight about navigating our lives today as we own what happened in the past in order to better own our decisions today. In this book we’ll examine the history of slavery and abolitionism through the stories, cultures, ministries, and families of these three men. We will see their horrendous errors regarding slavery and, in Wesley’s case, eventual correction—because he lived long enough to do so. Wesley’s silence regarding slavery ended when he was seventy-three years old, when he finally shared his *Thoughts Upon Slavery*—sixteen years after slave owner Jonathan Edwards died, and four years after slave owner George Whitefield died.”

Laying out the dominant attitudes of Christians toward slavery at the time, McGeever sets these “men of their times” in their own context, inviting us to learn how these shapers of American evangelicalism contributed to the tragic history of racism in America. He also explores how Christians finally began to recognize that slavery, which they’d excused for most of Christian history, is actually wrong. It’s a story that white evangelicals must wrestle with today.

Ownership is more than a book of history. It’s an invitation to examine our own legacies and to understand—and take ownership of—both our heritage and our own part in the story. McGeever writes, “You might think that slavery has nothing to do with you. But it does. By the end of this book my hope is that you will be able to own, with better clarity, the legacy you are writing with your life today.”



Tara Burns, print and online publicity
800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or tburns@ivpress.com

Krista Clayton, author interviews
800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or kclayton@ivpress.com



ivpress.com/media