



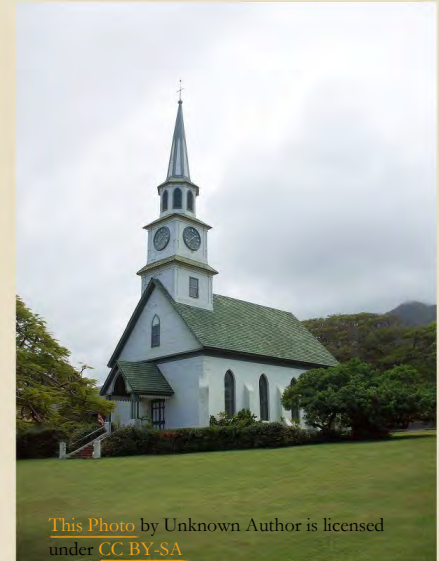
# BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS?

*Christianity's Perpetuation of  
Violence against Women of Color*

Olivia Brokaw

# Why This Topic?

- Prevalence of violence against women of color
  - Domestic, racialized, institutional
- Christianity perpetuates violence
- Both historic and current



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# About this Topic

- Approx. 35 percent of women suffer violence, physical or sexual, during their lifetime (“Facts and Figures”)
- American Indian and Black women: 10% and 7% more likely to experience intimate partner violence than white women (Osborne)
- The church must rectify its wrongs

# The Church, Women, and Violence

- Theological Distortions
  - Male Authority
    - Eve's Sin
    - Ephesians "Household Code"
- Male Authority → Male Violence

# The Church, Women, and Violence

- Other Theological Interpretations:
  - “Suffering Servant” Motif
  - Disapproval of Divorce
- Distortions → Vulnerability to Abuse

# The Church, Race, and Violence

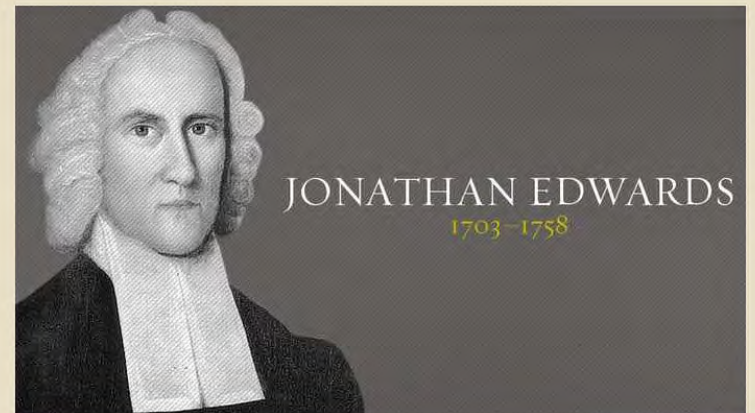
- Church's Racial Distortions:
  - Silence in the Church
  - Segregation within the Church
- Intersectional Distortions → Violence against Women of Color

# America's History of Racism

- Today's violence reflects racial injustice throughout history
- Early Abuses by Christians
- Physical vs. Spiritual Freedom
- Religion as a Vessel of Oppression

# Progress?

- As American history progressed, views on slavery and racial equality progressed little
- “Great Awakening”:
  - Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield
- Frederick Douglass and Religion as a Weapon



<https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/people/theologians/jonathan-edwards.html>



# America's Continual Injustice

- Improvements for people of color, yet continual social injustice
- Civil War
- Battles within Churches
- Frederick Douglass and Christianity

# America's Continual Injustice

- White supremacy following Civil War
  - Use of Christian motifs for violent purposes
- The church's subtle contribution to racism
  - Segregation and move to suburbs

# Historical Violence against Women

- U.S. history demonstrates both racial and gendered violence
- Male violence + race = “justified violence”
- Christianity’s perpetuation of racial, gendered violence
- Women of Color and sexualized violence

# Injustice and Dehumanization

- Racial and sexual injustice → dehumanization
- Douglass's Examples
  - Dehumanization is justified with Bible
  - Christianity of Bible vs. South

# Modern Violence against Women

- Patriarchal, racist distortions of the gospel contribute to violence
- “54% of women of color are survivors of intimate partner violence” (Osborne)
- Fear of seeking help
- The church’s silence



# Institutional Violence

- Police brutality against women of color
- From 2013-2016, “more than 70 Black women and girls have been murdered due to state violence (Khaleeli, 2016)” (Ashley Smith 264)
- The church’s support of police
- Women of color as “other”

# Reforming Injustice: Theology

- Theology, the church, and society must be reformed
- Theological Reform:
  - Adam's Complicity
  - Equality within "Household Code"

# Reforming Injustice: Church and Society

- Honesty about the past and mistakes
  - Repentance
- Programs tailored for women of color
- Church and society must work together



# Reforming Injustice: Church

- Tisby's approach to reconciliation and reform in the church:
  - ARC Method: awareness, relationships, commitment (194)
  - Church reparations
- Reform can be gracious

# Moving Forward

- The church must educate and discuss
- Act as children of God toward women of color
- Cry out against injustice, violence, oppression
- Be the world's peacemakers

\*\*Tisby, Jemar. *The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism*. Zondervan, 2019.