



STUDY GUIDE 2

Module 2 **What is the Doctrine of Discovery?**

To accompany film from 0:00 to 14:28

Opening prayer or song

Key Terms: Settler colonialism, Papal Bull, Manifest Destiny, Indian residential schools, Terra Nullius, Treaty, Reservation, Sacred sites, Fee Simple Title, Indian Removal Act

Activity: Timelines of Indigenous and Settler Histories

Materials needed: Paper (8.5 x 11" or larger) for each person, writing utensils

Pass out paper to each person in the group. Invite participants to draw two parallel timelines on their pieces of paper. Then, write events and approximate dates based on what they know of their own family and communal history on one timeline. On the other timeline, write what they know of Indigenous Peoples' history in their local geographic area or wherever their family migrated or settled. If any participants are Indigenous, they can focus on the Indigenous history timeline.

Compare your two timelines and share with one another. What stands out at first glance? What are the stories your family and social group tell about settler or Indigenous history, and what it means to be an American? How does your family talk about first acquiring their land, if they have passed down land? Can you detect any masks or half-truths?

*Adapted with permission from Elaine Enns, Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries. For more information, see: <http://www.chedmyers.org/articles/social-justice/settler-response-ability>

Discussion questions:

1. In the film, Ted Strong, Chief Judge of the Yakama Nation Tribal Court, said, "The Doctrine of Discovery, as practiced, is evil." What were some of the practices of the Doctrine of Discovery, according to the film or your own knowledge?
2. How are these practices manifested in your local area?* State? Nation? You might consider the treaty history in your area, forced removals, Indian residential schools, missions aimed at Indigenous Peoples, historic or ongoing struggles over water or other natural resources, and reservations either nearby or where people were moved.

**See Note to Facilitators below about how to define local area.*

3. Erica Littlewolf says that in her context, to be a Christian as a Native person means that one has to give up her/his Native identity. Have you seen or heard examples of this approach to Native cul-

- ture being practiced? What do you think is the presumed biblical basis for this practice? How do you view the intersection of faith and culture—and the resulting influence on cultural practices?
4. How are Indigenous Peoples in your area continuing or recovering traditional practices, languages, ceremonies, and/or other forms of culture? You might try searching online for Pow Wows in your area to visit and respectfully see firsthand.
 5. In the film, Dan Peplow shares a story of an encounter with an Indigenous person who observed, “Your people killed my people.” Imagine someone said those words to you. How would you respond?

Suggested Bible Reflections:

“The Rich Man and Lazarus,” Iris de León-Hartshorn

“The Gospel of Vulnerability,” Randy Woodley

Resources

- Interactive Map: “The Invasion of America: How the United States Took over an Eighth of the World,” <http://invasionofamerica.ehistory.org>
- [PDF Booklet of Doctrine of Discovery Timeline](#) (prepared by Sheri Hostetler and Ken Gingrich)
- [Conference Room Paper on the Doctrine of Discovery](#), 11th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Presented by the Haudenosaunee, the American Indian Law Alliance and the Indigenous Law Institute (2012)
- [The Doctrine of Discovery: The International Law of Colonialism](#), Conference Room Paper, 11th Session of the U.N. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Presented by Robert Miller (2012)
- “Addressing the colonial legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery” by Harley Eagle. Published in *Intersections: MCC theory & practice quarterly*, Winter 2014: Legacies of Colonialism. Available online at: <https://mcc.org/media/resources/738>.

NOTES FOR FACILITATORS:

- Pass out Doctrine of Discovery fact sheet (HANDOUT 3) and Ten Elements of the Doctrine of Discovery by Robert Miller (HANDOUT 4)
- Defining a “local area” for your congregation can be difficult. One way to do this is to draw a circle on a map with your church building at the center that encompasses where everyone from your congregation lives. The distance of miles from the church center to the outline of the circle can be the general radius for your local area. A more bioregional approach to defining your area would be to identify the watershed in which you live, since all life depends on water, and water defines geography. You can find your watershed on the map on the Environmental Protection Agency’s website: <https://cfpub.epa.gov/surf/locate/index.cfm>
- Depending on your region, settler participants may not know if Native Americans live in their area. One basic way of finding out would be to look at the most recent census of your area to see what percentage of people identified as Native American: <https://www.census.gov>



Photo from <http://www.canadianmennonite.org/treaty-6-anniversary>

Acts of Contrition and Reparative Justice Case Study: *Stoney Knoll Gathering*

In May of 1897, land (Reserve #107) was taken from the Young Chippewayan Band in Saskatchewan, Canada, by the Federal Government to make it available for white settlement. The Young Chippewayan people were never contacted and were not aware that their land had been relinquished, for it was done without their surrender or consent. In 1895, the Hague-Osler Mennonite Reserve was created when the Federal Government offered them a large tract of land north of Saskatoon up to Rosthern, a town about 67 km north of Saskatoon. This Mennonite Reserve, as it was known, was soon filled up, so that in October 1898, land near the town of Laird was added to it. The former Young Chippewayan Indian Reserve had now become a Reserve for Mennonite farmers. Mennonites became beneficiaries of this land transaction but were unaware of the history of the Young Chippewayan people and their loss. At the turn of the century, they were joined by German Lutheran settlers who moved into this community; their descendants are still there today.

The Young Chippewayan band has never been compensated for the land taken from them. Most of the descendants of this band reside in the North Battleford area, while others are near Prince Albert. They are considered to be squatters in the communities in which they reside. Their claim has been rejected by the Indian Claims Commission, which argues that they have a legitimate claim but that they still need to do genealogical work to determine their band membership.

Stoney Knoll Gathering 2006

On August 22, 2006, approximately 130 people (Young Chippewayans, Mennonites and Lutherans) gathered at Stoney Knoll to Commemorate the 130th Anniversary of the signing of Treaty Six and to continue the journey of building friendship and understanding. The group decided to meet at Stoney Knoll (*Pwashemow Chakatnow*), the highest place on the Reserve, which is considered a sacred place by the Young Chippewayan people. In 1910, the Lutherans built a church and cemetery on this site. The church was moved into Laird in the 1950s, so they, too, have a strong spiritual connection to this land.

The day began with a pipe ceremony and opening prayers from all communities. Each told stories of their connection to this land. The program also included dancing, singing, eating, greetings from dignitaries and exchange of gifts. There was time to visit, relax, mix, get to know one another better and enjoy each other's humor. A highlight was the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding by all three groups: giving thanks to the Creator, indicating respect for Covenants, including Treaties, and calling for a commitment to peace, justice and sufficiency for all communities. Participants agreed they did not want to fight amongst each other but to hold the Federal Government responsible for the injustice it created. Chief Weenie emphasized that this was not a time of confrontation but a time of healing between the peoples. He said perhaps these groups could set an example to the rest of the country of how all peoples could live in peace and harmony with each other. Chief Weenie made it clear that the Young Chippewyan respected the current ownership of the land by the settlers, and, in turn, Mennonite and Lutheran communities pledged prayer, moral and financial support for the Young Chippewyan band's ongoing struggle to obtain compensation for the land owed to them under Treaty Six after all these years. The gathering brought renewed hope to all those that were gathered there.

-Adapted with permission from Leonard Doell, originally for MC Canada Indigenous Justice webpage, 2011. See *Reserve 107: Reconciliation on the Prairies*, <http://www.reserve107thefilm.com/>, for a new short film about this history.