



STUDY GUIDE 4

Module 4 **Living the Doctrine of Discovery**

To accompany film from 20:21 – 29:49

Opening Prayer or Song

Key Terms: Ancestral Domain/Lands, Land Rights

Activity: Revealing Relationships of Extraction

Materials: Smartphone, chalkboard/ whiteboard, drawing utensils, sticky notes, world map, pins and string (optional)

A common refrain for many settlers in the U.S. is that they are not connected to Indigenous communities. In the U.S., the reservation system and long history of forced removals have created a sense of separation and a belief that the days of settler-Indigenous relations remain in the past. Furthermore, Indigenous Peoples and their concerns in the rest of the world often feel distant and disconnected from the daily lives of settlers in the U.S. Yet a major theme in the documentary film is that colonialism continues in neocolonial forms through resource extraction on Indigenous lands.

It can be helpful to reveal the often unseen connections to Indigenous peoples around the world through tracing the resources that power, feed, clothe, and support our daily lives. In this activity, invite participants to engage in the following exercise:

1. Find three common items in the room where you are gathered that are made up of extracted resources (cell phones or other electronics, gold rings or jewelry, coffee, bottled water, or representative items like car keys for oil or a heating unit for coal).
2. Select 1-2 people in the group to use their smartphones to look up where these resources are extracted or produced. It may be necessary to look up the minerals and metals used in the production of electronic technologies (eg. coltan). Write the name of the extracted resource on a sticky note.
3. On the world map, place the sticky note on the nation of origin (Indigenous or otherwise) for the resource. Draw lines (or use pins and string) to connect the source nations for these resources with the location of your congregation.
4. Reflect on these connections. Which of these sources were previously colonized and by what countries? Do you know about land or resource struggles happening there right now? Was this exercise easy or difficult? If difficult, why?
5. *Optional follow-up activity:* Write other ways your congregation is connected to these nations, either through missions, fair trade, Mennonite Central Committee partnerships, friendships, student exchanges or other relationships. Discuss other ways that you could connect with people in these nations apart from relationships of extraction.

Discussion Questions:

1. Pya Macliing Malayao connects the colonial Spanish Crown's ownership of the Philippines to the contemporary situation under the Mining Act of 1995, which allows 100% foreign ownership of mining projects and control over the Philippines' mineral resources. What kinds of impacts do you imagine this has on communities? What difference does land title make for Indigenous Peoples, such as the Kalanguya-Ikalahan Ancestral Domain that Katerina Friesen shares about in the film?
2. Reflect on what the Bible has to say about the ownership of resources and property. How is Christian European sovereignty over and possession of land and resources under the Doctrine of Discovery contrary to certain Biblical understandings of land and resources? For examples, see texts in "Facilitator's Notes" section below.
3. Dan Peplow says, "As a scientist, if I talk about values, my work is diminished... everybody is paralyzed and incapable of engaging in topics of morality, of right and wrong. The *only* community of people on earth that can deal with structural issues that are global in scale is the ecumenical community. And my question is, where are they?" What blocks or inhibits people of faith from addressing structural injustices? What are some ways of overcoming these obstacles? Reflect on Biblical texts, spiritual or worship practices, and/or faith traditions that empower you to address structural injustices.

Suggested Bible Reflections:

- "Tabula Rasa and Terra Nullius," Mzi Nkutha
"Collateral Damage," Regina Shands Stolfus
"I am a Canaanite Woman," Sarah Augustine

Resources:

- Moe-Lobeda, Cynthia D. *Resisting Structural Evil: Love as Ecological-Economic Vocation*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013.
- Smith, Andrea. *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2005.
- The Iconocast, Interview with Waziyatawin, April 2010
(<http://theiconocast.libsyn.com/s1e3-iconocast-mp3>)
- [The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (2007)

FACILITATOR'S NOTES:

- Your group may want to explore the following Biblical texts for question 2: Genesis 14:19 (God is called the Possessor of Heaven and Earth); Leviticus 25, especially vv. 23-28 (describes the Jubilee year and return of the land to those who lost their inheritance); Psalm 24:1 (asserts God's ownership and sovereignty over the Earth); Jesus' teachings from the Sermon on the Mount on wealth (such as Matthew 6:19-24); Matthew 21:19-22 (Jesus' response to the Rich Young Ruler); Mark 6:7-13 (Jesus sends out the 12 on mission without possessions); Luke 9:58 (Jesus has nowhere to lay his head); Luke 18:8-9 (Zaccheus promises to give half his possessions to the poor, Jesus affirms him as saved) Acts 22:44-45 (describes redistributive economics practiced by the early church).



Photo at left: CPTer Peter Haresnape with Elder Chickadee Richard on the Anishinaabe Water Walk to pray and protect the waters from Energy East pipeline in Treaty 3 (August 2015)

Acts of Contrition and Reparative Justice Case Study: *Christian Peacemaker Teams*

Indigenous Peoples Solidarity is a project of Christian Peacemaker Teams. Formerly the Aboriginal Justice Team, this full-time project was formally established in 2008 following several accompaniments in Canada, including the partnership with Grassy Narrows First Nation that began in 2002. The team is “mandated with undoing colonialism and supporting Indigenous communities seeking justice and defending their lands against corporate and government exploitation without community consent.” We are now primarily based in Treaty 1/Winnipeg, MB.

Through ongoing presence in Treaty 3, we’ve heard much about the issues affecting Indigenous peoples in the area. In the past century, the people of Asubpeeschoseewagong Netum Anishinabek, Treaty 3 territory (Grassy Narrows in Northwestern Ontario), have suffered from the genocidal effects of colonization through the residential school system, flooding and displacement by Ontario Hydro dams, forced relocation, mercury poisoning from an up-river pulp and paper mill, and the loss of animal habitat, berries and medicines from clear-cut logging. We see these issues less as Indigenous problems than an outcome of settler colonialism.

Our partners in Grassy Narrows First Nation have been struggling for land justice regarding logging and mercury poisoning for decades now, which are the result of outside businesses poisoning the waters and, with the cooperation of settler institutions, taking what they want from the land. This system has little consideration for the original inhabitants of this land and frankly, sees them as impediments to economic development. Additionally, our friends in Grassy Narrows First Nation and Shoal Lake 40 First Nation live under drinking- and boil-water advisories. The advisories at Shoal Lake 40 First Nation have been the longest standing in Canada: 19 years! We also encounter the legacies of residential schools, experiences of everyday racism, and the disproportionate level of poverty experienced by Indigenous peoples in this territory, which needs to be understood through the lens of colonization.

We strive to be in solidarity by advocating for and supporting our partners’ struggles. This often involves standing alongside them when facing potential settler/state violence to observe, support, and hopefully be a violence-reducing presence, such as during the height of the logging blockade in Grassy Narrows First Nation. We also strive to amplify the voices of our partners through speaking engagements, educational workshops, public witness, and sharing about these struggles through media and our networks. Additionally, we feel we have an important role in helping settlers, particularly churches, understand our colonial history as it relates to current experience and inviting people into the hard work of reconciliation. Our ten-day delegations to Treaty 3, for example, are an important exercise in drawing people into the work of solidarity with Indigenous peoples and hopefully creating more advocates for Indigenous rights.

We're learning to be in a respectful relationship that avoids recreating colonial relations. Of course, we make mistakes, but our work involves a lot of listening, a willingness to learn, receptiveness, and taking direction from our partners. Through these relationships, we're also learning new ways of relating to the land and to each other.

—Chuck Wright, full-time member of [CPT-Indigenous Peoples Solidarity](#)