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The Space We Take Up

*An exploration of the unintended consequences of a well-intended church
moving into the neighbourhood*

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

WHO

Members of a Canadian urban Christian community, primarily middle class and white

WHY

Well-intentioned urban churchgoers in gentrifying Canadian cities do not always understand the ramifications of moving into a neighbourhood. If we are truly seeking the shalom of our spaces, we need to engage with the unintended consequences of moving into them.

SO THAT

We can better seek the *shalom* of our spaces, and better understand what it means for others that we occupy them.

WHERE

Any comfortable open space with chairs that can be moved into a circle; the content of the workshop will be uncomfortable for some, so an open space that encourages safety in vulnerability is crucial. A talking piece would be a worthwhile element to incorporate. The size can depend on the number of participants, but open, comfortable and with movable chairs is important.

WHEN

Evenings or weekends to allow the largest number of people to attend. This will be challenging for those with small children and those with many things on in the evenings. For this reason, spreading the sessions out every two to three weeks would lessen the commitment necessary. Each session will be 2-2.5 hours. The plan will include 2 hours worth of material and planned activities, but leaving space for discussion to continue afterwards would be best.

WHAT

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this series, participants will have:

Read and discussed definitions of gentrification, privilege, and colonization/decolonization

Discussed what it means to live biblically in our neighbourhoods

Compared *shalom* and *welfare* as biblical concepts

Developed working definitions of gentrification, privilege and colonization/decolonization as they relate to this city

Identified signs of gentrification in their neighbourhoods, privilege in their own lives, and effects of colonization in their spaces

Brainstormed ways to practically engage with the issues that arise in the sessions

Considered (privately) and discussed (as a group) land acknowledgements and their significance

WEEK ONE: GENTRIFICATION

Task A: Ground Rules, Acknowledgement, Prayer & Warmup

Because even our opening for the session is one that will stretch and challenge us, let's set some ground rules for our time together before we begin. Consider and call out anything that we should have posted on the wall to bear in mind as we meet and discuss these challenging topics.

Task B: Open with land acknowledgement and prayer:

“Creator God, your love is so high, deep and wide
It is thick and has swallowed us whole,
And in spite of ourselves
You have won us over, again and again.
We ask for your presence in the midst of hard truths
And you guidance to see where they take us.
We gather this evening, God,
In the traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee
And the Anishnaabeg First Nations peoples
On land covered by the Upper Canada and
The Dish With One Spoon treaties,
Adjacent to Haldimand Treaty territories.
This evening we struggle to find *shalom*
On a land where settlers chose ideology and not love
May we bear this in mind in our spaces
And so learn to choose better.
Show us how to be good neighbours
Who bring the *shalom* of our cities.
Creator God, grant us your mercy. Amen.”

(Liturgy borrowed and slightly altered from Deb Whalen-Blaize's curated Wine Before Breakfast Chapel at Wycliffe College March 6, 2018.)

Highlight, underline, circle (or just mark however) the words that jump out at you from the prayer/land acknowledgement. Spend a few minutes thinking about why they are meaningful (or problematic) for you.

Split into groups of 3 or 4 and reflect on these questions.

Have you ever been to an event or get together where a land acknowledgement was done?

What was the event or get together?

How did it make you feel?

This will come up for us again in the weeks to come, so keep the things that came to mind today. We will do a land acknowledgement again next time we are together, and talk about it as a group.

Task C: The Bible on neighbouring.

“Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the shalom of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your shalom.”

Jeremiah 29:4-7

On your own, take some time to read this passage over. Circle the words or phrases that are most meaningful, striking, or surprising for you.

Note that the passage has been slightly altered; the original said “But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find you welfare.” I have used the original Hebrew and included shalom because it can carry something of a different meaning than ‘welfare.’



Think about what *shalom* and *welfare* mean for you. How are they the same? How are they different? Write down some things that come to mind in the box below.



Let's talk about this in groups of 3 or 4. What is the difference between *shalom* and *welfare*. What does it mean to seek the *shalom* of our city?

The hope for this series of evenings together is that we can begin to consider, explore and discuss the ways in which the *shalom* of our city is wrapped up in the *shalom* of those that we share our spaces with, and our own *shalom* is bound up in both. Today we will consider how the economic growth and development of our city, in the form of gentrification, affects our city and those who live here.

Task D: Gentrification in general.

I've put some words and concepts up around the room that are often associated with gentrification: 'urban renewal,' 'urban rejuvenation,' 'displacement,' 'economic growth,' and 'economic injustice.' You have stickers in front of you: stick the red dot on the term that is the least true for you, the yellow dot to the one that resonates a bit, and the green dot on the term that seems most true for you. If gentrification is a new concept for you, not to worry, you don't have to participate.

Let's look together at what where the stickers have been placed and discuss as a group what it might mean that we are moved by certain words and concepts. What does this tell us about ourselves? What does it tell us about our city?

We will explore definitions of 'gentrification' next.



Task E: Defining gentrification.

‘Gentrification’ was first coined by Ruth Glass in 1964:

“One by one, many of the working-class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes - upper and lower. Shabby, modest mews and cottages ... have been taken over, when their leases have expired, and have become elegant, expensive residences. ... Once this process of ‘gentrification’ starts in a district, it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working-class occupiers are displaced, and the whole social character of the district is changed.”

(Ruth Glass, “London: Aspects of Change” (1964), in *Cliches of Urban Doom and Other Essays* (Basil Blackwell: New York NY, 1989), 138.)

A more contemporary definition from [businessdictionary.com](http://www.businessdictionary.com):

“The process of wealthier residents moving to an area, and the changes that occur due to the influx of wealth. As wealthier inhabitants move into an area that is already populated with lower-income residents, the neighborhood begins to change as well. Often this will spark an urban renewal process, which cleans up the town, but often leads to an increase in rent, taxes, and other items. Sometimes this change means that the previous residents can no longer afford to live in that neighborhood, which is why gentrification can sometimes be used in a negative context. However, many good changes also historically accompany gentrification, such as decreased crime rates and increased economic activity.”

(<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/gentrification.html#ixzz2EcW0qbxj>)

Take some time to read these over again, marking up the paper however is helpful.

In pairs, talk about what you see when you read these two definitions side-by-side.

How does each definition portray gentrification?

What difference does that make?

Which definition resonates with you?

What might you add to it?

After a few minutes, we will bring a couple of thoughts to the larger group and use them to develop our own working definition of gentrification in Hamilton.



Photo by [Anna Holowetzki](#) on [Unsplash](#) (used with permission)

Task F: Where do you see this in your city? In your neighbourhood?

On your own, take some time to think about what this looks like in your neighbourhood. Picture your own street. How long have you lived there? The longer you have lived in a place, the more change you will have seen, but some changes happen quickly. What has changed since you moved in, if anything?

Use the space below to jot down anything that comes to mind, if that is helpful.

After you have considered it on your own, get into the same pairs and discuss your thoughts.

Take a few minutes to do so, then we will bring these observations to the larger group.



Task G: Defining gentrification in Hamilton

Now that you have: *considered what you bring into this space in your own thoughts or feelings about gentrification; read, examined and evaluated two definitions of gentrification; and considered what gentrification looks like in our city and neighbourhoods*, we are going to build our own working definition as it relates to this city.

On your own, spend some time rereading the definitions provided and reflecting on where you see them play out in your spaces. We are going to use these observations to create a definition.

Finish this sentence: IN HAMILTON, GENTRIFICATION IS ... or GENTRIFICATION LOOKS LIKE ... or GENTRIFICATION CAUSES ... and write it down below.

After a couple minutes, I'll ask you to call out the things that come to mind. I will write them down as you call them out and we will use them to build a 2 to 3 sentence definition of it.

Write down the definition that we develop in the box below, so you can take it with you when you go.



Task H: Going back into your spaces.

I am going to hand out an exercise called an ‘urban exegesis.’ *Exegesis* is a Greek word that means ‘to lead out’ and is often used in biblical studies. A biblical exegesis is a close look at a text to bring out what is within, around, and behind the text. An urban exegesis is an examination of our city, neighbourhood or space that brings out what we wouldn’t always notice.

This exercise will give you some tools for using all of your senses to notice details in your neighbourhoods and to attempt to draw some conclusions from those details. In the box below, write down the name of a person you trust (and want to spend two hours with) who lives in your neighbourhood. Set aside time to do the urban exegesis with them. When you talk with them, tell them one thing that you learned in today’s session about the space we take up in our city.



Task I: Let’s go around and each name one thing that was challenging and one thing that was encouraging.

Task J: For next time.

The next time that we gather, we will begin the same way we did this week, then **I will ask each person to bring with them one observation from their neighbourhood walk and urban exegesis** to share with the group.

After that we will consider the effect that white privilege has on the *shalom* of our spaces.

Task K: Close with prayer.

WEEK TWO: WHITE PRIVILEGE

Task A: Acknowledgement, Prayer & Warmup

As we begin, keep in mind the ground rules we laid out last week.

Open with land acknowledgement and prayer:

“Creator God, your love is so high, deep and wide
It is thick and has swallowed us whole,
And in spite of ourselves
You have won us over, again and again.
We ask for your presence in the midst of hard truths
And you guidance to see where they take us.
We gather today
In the traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee
And the Anishnaabeg First Nations peoples
On land covered by the Upper Canada and
The Dish With One Spoon treaties,
Adjacent to Haldimand Treaty territories.
This evening we struggle to find *shalom*
On a land where settlers chose ideology and not love
May we bear this in mind in our spaces
And so learn to choose better.
Show us how to be good neighbours
Who bring the *shalom* of our cities.
Creator God, grant us your mercy. Amen.”

(Liturgy borrowed and slightly altered from Deb Whalen-Blaize’s
curated Wine Before Breakfast Chapel at Wycliffe College March 6,
2018.)

On your own, draw one
image that comes to mind
after hearing the prayer and
land acknowledgement.

We will discuss these images
in pairs and then hear from a
few of you in the larger
group.



In pairs, reflect on these questions.

Did you think of the land acknowledgement in the time since we last got together?

What image came to mind? Why?

Let's hear from a couple of you in the larger group.

Task B: A look back on gentrification...

As a group, let's each share an observation that we made while walking in our neighbourhoods and any thoughts we have about how our discussions about gentrification affected our perceptions of our spaces.

Task C: *Shalom* and neighbouring.

Let's read this passage from Jeremiah again.

“Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the shalom of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your shalom.”

Jeremiah 29:4-7

Last time we got together we considered this passage and the *shalom* or peace or welfare that we are called to in our spaces. Today we will continue this conversation and consider how privilege and power are parts of the spaces we take up.



Task D: Defining privilege.

Here is a definition of ‘white privilege’ according to the Oxford English Dictionary online:

“Inherent advantages possessed by a white person on the basis of their race in a society characterized by racial inequality and injustice.”

https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/white_privilege

Here is an explanation of white privilege by author, speaker, researcher and social worker Brené Brown. Brown is white, female, cisgender, straight, upper middle class, and holds a masters degree. Bear in mind what her ‘power flower’ might look like while we dive into her definition of white privilege.

“Privilege, when it comes to race, is about unearned rights.

I can walk into any store and find a doll that matches my daughter’s skin.

I can drive in any area near my home and not get pulled over.

I can go to the movies and hold hands with my partner and not fear getting hit in the head with a baseball bat.

I can wear a symbol of my religion like a cross necklace and not fear being called a murderer or terrorist.”

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/brenebrown/videos/1778878652127236/>

On your own, take some time to read these over, marking them up however is helpful.

Write some thoughts on the next page about how these definitions resonate with you.



In groups of three or four, discuss the two definitions.

How do they make you feel?

Where or how can you see them play out in your own life?

Let's hear from a few of you in the larger group.

Task E: Exploring our own privilege.

You each have a sheet of paper in front of you with brief instructions and a few statements written below. On your own, take some time to read them over and rank the statements for how true they are for you, in your experience.

Take a few minutes to do so. We will not share our totals because I do not want it to feel like a competition or that there is any kind of blame being given, but we will discuss what we read and felt.

After a few minutes, get into pairs and discuss what you found. After a few minutes, we will hear from a few of you in the larger group.

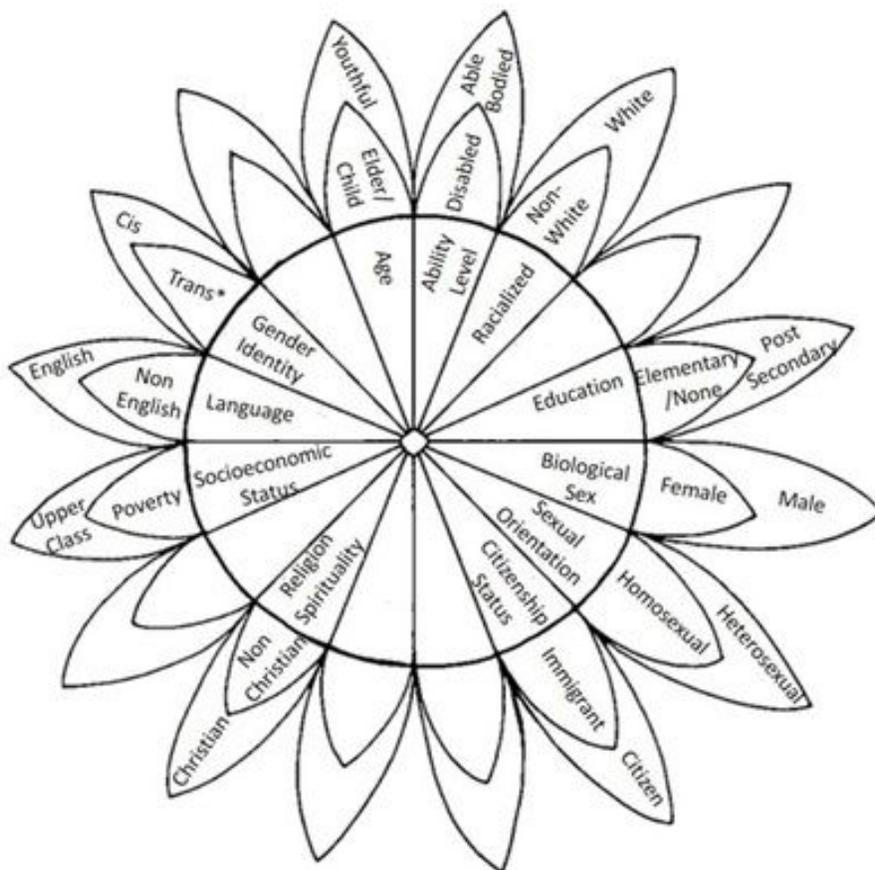


Task F: Complicating our own privilege.

On your own, take some time to examine the ‘power flower’ below.¹ The centre circle of the flower is broken up into just a few of the elements that make up who we are as individuals in society (i.e. language). The petals outside of the ring break up those elements into smaller parts (i.e. Non English or English).

Consider what the flower shows us about ourselves, each other, and our society.

Using the pencil crayons in the baskets in front of you, colour in the petals that describe you and add any other elements that are missing.



Source: Barb Thomas, Doris Marshall Institute, 1991.

¹ This is an exercise borrowed from Esther Wesley and Peter Noteboom’s White Privilege Workshop at the Anglican Church of Canada’s 2015 Council of General Synod

In pairs, discuss your flower: what you see and what it means for you.

After a few minutes, read these questions on your own. Write down one or two thoughts in the box below, which we will talk about as a group.

What did you see?

How was your flower different from your partner's?

How was it the same?

What are some of the historical or social roots of the differences between the inner and outer rings of petals?

How does the importance of these petals change depending on our context?



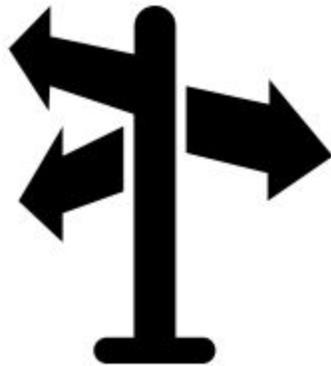
As a group, let's talk about your thoughts.

Task G: Intersections of privilege.

What might have become clear in the last exercise is that privilege is not simple or straightforward and it can change depending on the context in which we find ourselves.

The 'power flower' has petals to indicate that there are different parts of our identity that give us power and privilege, but the number of petals (and the fact that the flower was not complete) shows us that our identities are complex. Using this complexity to understand power and privilege between individuals and groups of people is called *intersectionality*.

As a group, let's take a couple minutes to consider ways in which power or privilege might change depending on the context in which we find ourselves and/or the intersections of our identities. Feel free to write notes or ideas in the space below.



Task H: Defining 'privilege' in our spaces.

Just like we did last time in our conversation on gentrification, let's work together to develop a definition of privilege as it relates to our spaces.

On your own, turn back to the definitions of white privilege provided earlier and finish this sentence with them in mind: IN HAMILTON, PRIVILEGE IS ... or PRIVILEGE LOOKS LIKE ... or PRIVILEGE CAUSES ... and write it down below.



In groups of 3 or 4, take a couple minutes to look at what you've come up with and turn each of your individual definitions into one definition that everyone agrees with. We will share these as a group.

Task I: Let's go around and each name one thing that was challenging and one thing that was encouraging as we head back into our spaces.

Task J: Going back into your spaces.

I want you to think of one person (who is not here, but ideally who lives in your neighbourhood) with whom you have a safe relationship. Write their name in the box below.

Share with them what you learned today; what was frustrating; what was new; what was helpful.



Task K: For next time.

Take some time before we gather next to download and explore an app and/or website called *whose.land*, which was designed by indigenous organizations in Canada to help educate people on treaties, nations and the realities of colonialism.

This will introduce you to our next session on colonization and decolonization and we will discuss the website and app at the start of our next session together.

Task L: Close in prayer.

WEEK THREE: DECOLONIZATION

Task A: Acknowledgement, Prayer & Warmup

Open with land acknowledgement and prayer:

“Creator God, your love is so high, deep and wide
It is thick and has swallowed us whole,
And in spite of ourselves
You have won us over, again and again.
We ask for your presence in the midst of hard truths
And you guidance to see where they take us.
We gather this evening, God,
In the traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee
And the Anishnaabeg First Nations peoples
On land covered by the Upper Canada and
The Dish With One Spoon treaties,
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This evening we struggle to find *shalom*
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May we bear this in mind in our spaces
And so learn to choose better.
Show us how to be good neighbours
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Creator God, grant us your mercy. Amen.”

(Liturgy borrowed and slightly altered from Deb Whalen-Blaise's curated Wine Before Breakfast Chapel at Wycliffe College March 6, 2018.)

Take a moment to read the questions below. Then, as a whole group, let's reflect on them.

Now that you have heard the land acknowledgement for the third time in our sessions, how are you feeling about it?

Has it changed your perception of the space you live, work and play in?

Write down one sentence that comes to mind after hearing

the land acknowledgement for the third time. This sentence will not be shared, unless you are comfortable bringing it before the whole group.

Write the sentence in the box below.

Task B: Whose Land?

Last time we met, I asked everyone to go home and either download the “Whose Land” app or explore the www.whose.land website and write down or set aside some thoughts about what you saw. Let’s talk as a group about what each of us thought or noticed about these resources. What did you learn? What surprised you (or didn’t)?

Let’s go around the circle and talk about that. You’re welcome to pass.



Task C: A story of colonialism.

I'm going to read a story. Close your eyes to listen carefully, if that will be helpful for you. If anyone would like a copy of the story in order to read along, let me know. Feel free to use the empty space on this page to write things that come to mind.

This story is borrowed from Randy Woodley, a Keetoowah Cherokee descendant and professor of faith and culture, as written in "On Repudiation: A Cherokee Perspective."

Once the story is done, let's leave some silent space for everyone to process their thoughts and write one word or phrase in the box below that comes to mind.



As a group, let's talk about what you wrote.

Task D: Defining colonialism.

You have some sticky notes in front of you. On your own, write a few words or phrases (one on each sticky note, though) that come to mind when you think of indigenous peoples, colonialism, and colonization and stick them on the wall at the front.

This is so we can understand where everyone in the room is coming from with this topic and respect that as we go forward.

We will read these out loud and then hear from a few people about your thoughts and what experience you bring into this space.



Task E: Definitions of colonialism.

In groups of three, take a walk around the room. I have posted definitions of ‘colonization,’ ‘colonialism,’ ‘settler,’ ‘indigenous,’ ‘Doctrine of Discovery,’ and ‘*terra nullius*.’ I will let you know when you should rotate.

Do the first lap in silence, just reading the information posted. Everyone will go around a second time in the same groups and discuss the definitions.

What surprises you (or doesn’t) about these definitions?

How do they make you feel?

How do they relate to your own spaces?

Once everyone has gone around the room twice, we will sit back down and share some thoughts in the larger group.

Task F: A song of colonialism.

I'm going to play you a song. Close your eyes to listen carefully, if that will be helpful for you. If anyone would like a copy of the song in order to read along, let me know. Again, feel free to use the space below to write things that come to mind. We will spend a minute or two after the song in silence to give space for thought, then talk about what came to mind.

This song is called "My Country 'Tis of Thy People You're Dying," written and performed by Buffy Sainte-Marie, a First Nations musician and activist from Saskatchewan who has been making music since the 1960s. This version of the song is from 2017, but it was originally released in 1966. She's made some changes since then, and this version may hit much closer to home for us than the original.

Consider:

What does the song tell you about the history of Canada?

How is that history different from what we hear most often?

What does it tell you about the people who live on this land?

How does it make you feel?

In pairs, talk about what you heard.

We will hear a thought or observation from each pair in the larger group.

Task G: Being *settlers* of our spaces.

We are going to go back to one definition that we saw up on the wall earlier: ‘settler.’

Each dictionary has its own definition of ‘settler,’ and each conveys a particular message. On your own, read over the three definitions below. The first is the definition you read on the wall earlier.

“A settler is a person who has migrated to an area and established a permanent residence there, often to colonize the area.”

(Wikipedia)

“[A settler is] a person who settles in an area, typically one with no or few previous inhabitants.”

(Google dictionary)

“Settler societies are founded by migrant groups who assume a superordinate position vis-à-vis native inhabitants and build self-sustaining states that are de jure or de facto independent from the mother country and organized around the settlers’ political domination over the indigenous population.”

Ronald Weitzer.. *Transforming Settler States*. University of California Press, 1990.

On your own, take some time to read these over and circle the words or phrases that stand out. Take some time on the last definition, because it is quite wordy.

In pairs, restate the last definition in your own words for your partner and compare all three.

How are the three definitions similar and how are they different?

How does the way in which we define something affect how we engage with it or think about it?

Let's hear from a couple of you about this.

Task H: Being settlers in Hamilton.

On your own and in the box below, finish this sentence:

'As a settler in Hamilton, I ...'

We will compile our answers as a group.



Task I: Let's go around and each name one thing that was challenging and one thing that was encouraging as we head back into our spaces.

Task J: Going back into our spaces.

Just like last time, write down the name of someone who you share your space with and write it down below. It can be the same person as after our last sessions or someone new. Share with them something that you learned today, something that was good and affirming and something that was challenging. These topics are too big to carry alone, we can only learn to neighbour well if we do it together.



Task K: Close in prayer.

Appendix A: Facilitator Guide

***Ensuring safety while participants wrestle with the material is essential for participants to be able to learn. Each session becomes (increasingly) more difficult, which is the purpose of the design, but participants must be given the space to process.

- Throughout all three workshops, participants must be able to move freely, use the restroom, get something to eat or drink (facilitator should bring coffee/tea/water and snacks, or know that someone else will).
- Establish ground rules for learning and discussion first and stick to them. Hang them where all can see them for all three sessions. The facilitator must be clear that they are bound to the ground rules, as well.

Supplies

- Different writing utensils: pens, pencils, thick markers
- Paper for note taking
- **Large** yellow, green and red stickers for Task C in Week One
- Copies of Appendices B & C for Week Three
- Items for people to touch and play with, if they need
- Flip chart
- Snacks
- Coffee/tea/water/juice
- TAPE
- Week One, Task D: 8.5 by 11 sheets of paper with: ‘urban renewal,’ ‘urban rejuvenation,’ ‘displacement,’ ‘economic growth,’ and ‘economic injustice.’
- Week Three, Task D: Large, colourful sticky notes
- Week Three, Task E: 8.5 by 11 sheets of paper with definitions of ‘colonization,’ ‘colonialism,’ ‘settler,’ ‘indigenous,’ ‘Doctrine of

Discovery,' and '*terra nullius*' (Appendix D)

- Flowers or a potted plant

Timing

- Each task should take 12-15 minutes, in order to allow for discussion. Prepare people for a 2.5 hour evening, in order that people can continue conversation after the tasks are complete, and to give 'wobble' room.
- Week 1 & 2, Tasks I-L and Week 3, Tasks I-K should take 15 minutes for all tasks together (naming challenges & encouragement, going back into our spaces, for next time, and closing in prayer)
- Do not hurry it along. If you begin to run out of room, only hear from one or two people in the larger group after tasks are completed, but try not to rush through the material.

Opening and Closing Prayers

- The opening prayer is the same in each session for the purpose of discussing land acknowledgements
- There is no closing prayer, the facilitator may pray or ask if anyone else would like to do so.

Appendix B: A Story of Colonialism

By Randy Woodley, a Keetoowah Cherokee descendant and professor of faith and culture

There were two White men who showed up on a remote path and asked if they could hunt buffalo and live for a while among the Cherokee. Since there were plenty of buffalo back then, and no one had ever seen or heard of a White man (and thus had no reason to distrust them), those Cherokees decided to give the men food and a place to sleep. After feeding them, they felt the best hospitality they could offer was to give them a nice, thick buffalo robe on which to sleep and to let them know they would be secure.

The Cherokees said, “Just lay this buffalo robe down and you will always have a place to stay here in Cherokee country. Where you lay down your buffalo robe, that place will be yours. It now belongs to you.”

Well, the two White men had an idea. And when the Cherokees came back later the next evening to check on them, they found out just what the White men were up to. It seems the two men spent the whole day cutting the buffalo robe into one long, thin strip, starting from the outside and going all the way to the center. Now, a buffalo robe is a big hide, so that strip ended up being very long indeed. The White men had stretched and laid that strip across this great big area, connecting it at the ends, making one enormous square. The Cherokees looked puzzled.

Then the White men proclaimed, “You said that wherever we put this buffalo robe, the land is ours. Now you see where the buffalo robe is. Everything inside that square is ours!”

Randy Woodley, “On Repudiation: A Cherokee Perspective,” in *Yours, Mine, Ours: Intotemak* (Fall/Winter 2016), 126.

Appendix C: A Song of Colonialism

“My Country ‘Tis of Thy People You’re Dying”

© 2017 *Words & Music by Buffy Sainte-Marie*

Now that your big eyes are finally opened
Now that you’re wondering, “How must they feel?”
Meaning them that you’ve chased across Canada’s movie
screens;
Now that you’re wondering, “How can it be real?”
That the ones you’ve called colourful, noble and proud
In your school propaganda,
They starve in their splendor.
You asked for our comment, I simply will render:
My country ‘tis of thy people you’re dying.
Now that the longhouses “breed superstition,”
You force us to send our children away
To your schools where they’re taught to despise their
traditions
Forbid them their languages;
Then further say that
Canadian history really began
When explorers set sail out of Europe
And stress that the nations of leeches who conquered these
lands
Were the biggest, and bravest, and boldest, and best.
And yet where in your history books is the tale
Of the genocide basic to this country’s birth?
Of the preachers who lied? And the people who died?
How a nation of patriots returned to their earth?
Where does it tell of the starvation hell?
As the children were herded, and raped, and converted?
And how do we comfort the missing and murdered?
My country ‘tis of thy people you’re dying
A few of the conquered have somehow survived
Their blood runs the redder, though genes have been paled
From Arctic Inuvik to Niagara Falls
The wounded, the losers, the robbed sing their tale.
From Vancouver Island to the Labrador Sea
The white nation fattened while others grew lean.
Oh the tricked and evicted, they know what I mean:
My country ‘tis of thy people you’re dying.

The past it just crumbled; the future just threatens
Our life blood is shut up in your papers and banks.
And now here you come, bill of sale in your hand
And surprise in your eyes that we're lacking in thanks
For the blessings of civilization you brought us
The lessons you've taught us; the ruin you've wrought us.
Oh, see what our trust in O Canada got us.
My country 'tis of thy people you're dying.
Now that the pride of the sires needs charity;
Now that we're harmless and safe behind laws;
Now that my life's to be known as your heritage;
Now that even the graves have been robbed;
Now that our chosen way is your novelty;
Hands on our hearts we salute you your victory.
Choke on your true white and scarlet hypocrisy,
Pitying your blindness; Oh, why can't you see
That the eagles of war whose wings lend you glory
Are never no more than buzzards and crows
Pushed some wrens from their nest;
Stole their eggs; changed their story.
The mockingbird sings it: it's all that she knows.
"Aw, what can I do?" say a privileged few
With a lump in your throat and a tear in your eye.
Can't you see that their poverty's profiting you?
My country 'tis of thy people you're dying.

Appendix D: Week Three/Task E Definitions

(Copy and paste into document in landscape orientation, one definition to a page, in large print.)

Colonisation:

“Colonization (or colonisation) is a process by which a central system of power dominates the surrounding land and its components.”

(Source: Wikipedia definition)

Colonialism:

“**Colonialism** is the policy of a nation seeking to extend or retain its authority over other people or territories, generally with the aim of developing or exploiting them to the benefit of the colonizing country and helping the colonies modernize in terms defined by the colonizers, especially in economics, religion and health.”

(Source: Wikipedia definition)

Settler:

“A **settler** is a person who has migrated to an area and established a permanent residence there, often to colonize the area. **Settlers** are generally from a sedentary culture, as opposed to nomads who share and rotate their settlements with little or no concept of individual land ownership.”

(Source: Wikipedia definition)

Indigenous:

“**Indigenous** peoples, also known as first peoples, aboriginal peoples or native peoples, are ethnic groups who are the original inhabitants of a given region, in contrast to groups that have settled, occupied or colonized the area more recently.”

(Source: Wikipedia definition)

Doctrine of Discovery:

“The Doctrine of Discovery was [used] by European monarchies in order to legitimize the colonization of lands outside of Europe. Between the mid-fifteenth century and the mid-twentieth century, this idea allowed European entities to seize lands inhabited by indigenous peoples under the guise of discovery. In 1494, the Treaty of Tordesillas declared that only non-Christian lands could be colonized under the Discovery Doctrine.”

(Source: Wikipedia definition)

Terra nullius

Terra nullius is a Latin expression meaning "nobody's land", and is a principle sometimes used in international law to describe territory that may be acquired by a state's occupation of it.

(Source: Wikipedia definition)

