



Laboring Toward Wholeness

A TRAINING ON DISMANTLING PATRIARCHY
PARTICIPANT MANUAL

Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz, Jenny Castro, Erica Littlewolf,
Chantelle Todman Moore, Linda Gehman Peachey, Regina Shands Stoltzfus

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Laboring Toward Wholeness A Training on Dismantling Patriarchy

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INTRODUCTION

Do you remember the moment when you realized that you were created in the image of God? For some of us, this has been a truth we've grown up knowing. For others, it's been a lifelong process of discovery. Shaped first by familial and cultural norms and then by peers, community and society, we each have developed an understanding of who we are created to be and how we are to be in the world.

Even in this day and time, we need not search far to see the fruit of patriarchy pervading and influencing our systems and social structures. We see it in the prevalence of sexualized violence. (We have chosen to use the term sexualized violence which describes any violence, physical or psychological, carried out through sexual means or by targeting a person's sexuality). We see it in the lack of women in leadership in our organizations and institutions. We see it in messages we communicate and the stereotypes we pass on to our children. We see it in the dollar amounts we pay women to do the same jobs as men. We see it in the way we collectively treat people who don't conform to prescribed gender roles and expectations. We see it in myriad insignificant conversations we have daily.

Patriarchy is a social structure in which men hold power and domination over all others.¹ It is not God's intention for humanity and creation. We offer this alternative vision. Through this training we'll explore the history and roots of patriarchy and how it got entangled with our faith. We'll unpack the church's role in perpetuating it as well as our responsibility to dismantle it. We'll search the Bible for truths about who we are created to be. And we'll learn to recognize and respond to sexism and patriarchy in our own lives and contexts.

¹ Adapted from the Indigenous People's Solidarity Movement Ottawa.

CURRICULUM WRITERS

LORRAINE STUTZMAN AMSTUTZ, M.S.W., is the foster care coordinator for COBYS Family Services. She previously served as coordinator of Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) Restorative Justice program. Lorraine has co-authored *The Little Book of Restorative Discipline for Schools* with Judy Mullet and *What Will Happen to Me?* with Howard Zehr. She has authored the *Little Book of Victim Offender Conferencing* and is a contributing author to *The Little Book of Restorative Justice for Sexual Abuse*. She received her bachelor's degree in social work from Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Virginia (where she was awarded the Distinguished Service Award for 2002) and her master's degree in social work from Marywood University, Scranton, Pennsylvania. In 2017 she was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award for her restorative justice work by the Northwest Justice Forum. Lorraine lives in Akron, Pennsylvania.

JENNY CASTRO is the Director of Programs at Martinez Street Women's Center in San Antonio and the former coordinator of Women in Leadership for Mennonite Church USA. She has a degree in English and has worked in education in a variety of contexts, including community and women's health, public education and development. She's passionate about justice, truth and their connection. She is inspired by the energy and power that the Spirit ignites within us all as we unite and work together in love. Jenny lives in San Antonio, Texas with her husband and three kids.

ERICA LITTLEWOLF is from the Northern Cheyenne tribe of southeastern Montana and currently lives in her home community of Busby. She works for Mennonite Central Committee Central States with the Indigenous Visioning Circle, where she is committed to the work of decolonization, authentic relationship and healing. She has a bachelor's degree in psychology and American Indian studies and applies her schooling to social justice issues and how they affect Indigenous people.

CHANTELLE TODMAN MOORE, MBA, is co-founder of unlock Ngenuity, a consulting, coaching and research business. Chantelle holds a bachelor's degree in International Community Development and an MBA in International Economic Development. She is a Qualified Administrator for the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) and is passionate about embracing diversity and difference as a gift, seeking justice as a mandate and being moved to act by love. She lives in Philadelphia with her family.

LINDA GEHMAN PEACHEY, D.MIN., is a freelance writer living in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. She has a master of divinity degree from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana, and a doctor of ministry degree from Lancaster Theological Seminary. Previously, Linda worked for Mennonite Central Committee on women's concerns and also served with her husband, Titus, as co-director of Peace and Justice Ministries. She and Titus have two adult daughters and enjoy visiting them in Chicago and Guatemala. She is a member of East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster.

REGINA SHANDS STOLTZFUS, PH.D., teaches in the Peace, Justice and Conflict Studies department at Goshen College in Indiana, where her courses include Race, Class and Ethnic Relations; Personal Violence and Healing; Spiritual Path of the Peacemaker; and Transforming Conflict and Violence. She is co-founder of the Roots of Justice Anti-Oppression Process (formerly the Damascus Road Anti-Racism Process).

MENNONITE CHURCH USA'S OFFICE OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Women in Leadership works to dismantle patriarchal systems in Mennonite Church USA by empowering women to live out the call of God on their lives, increase their capacities, and contribute their wisdom in congregations, conferences, agencies and institutions.

1. Establishing Norms and Ways of Being Together

COMMUNITY COMMITMENTS

Centering the margins:

We create and hold space at the center of our shared experience (discussion, worship, action) for those whose voices have been historically on the margins in our country, in our communities, in academia, in our denomination and in conference and congregational settings.

Comfort with discomfort:

We come into this shared space, expecting to be challenged and uncomfortable, pushed out of our comfort zone, letting go of “business as usual” or what feels normal to us.

Bringing our whole selves:

We create a context together where we each can feel safe enough to be authentic, sharing the gift of ourselves with one another.

Naming hard things:

We will not always get it right. We will make mistakes. We enter this space expecting to encounter difficult situations. We commit to naming and engaging with one another when things get hard. We commit to speaking truth with love.

ESTABLISHING NORMS AND WAYS OF BEING TOGETHER

Practicing grace and space:

We will extend grace to each other. We'll set boundaries, recognizing that sometimes the most loving thing we can do is create healthy space between us.



VALUES-BASED APPROACH

Time/time oppression:

Acknowledge work that needs to be done in a limited amount of time and the need to honor the goals and objectives of the training.

Defining respect:

Respect is subjective and shaped by your cultural values. Be mindful that what may feel disrespectful to one person may be truth telling to another. When a person is speaking, we will give our full attention.

Confidentiality:

What is said in the room, stays in the room unless permission has been asked and granted. Do not tell other people's stories.

Step up, step back:

Recognize that if you are not someone who has been speaking during the training, it may be time to speak up. If you are someone whose voice has been heard often, it may be time to remain silent.

Being fully present:

We are investing time and space for this important conversation and work. Please respect your

ESTABLISHING NORMS AND WAYS OF BEING TOGETHER

and others' investment and be fully present throughout the process. Keep social media, cell phone usage and daydreaming to a minimum.

Safety:

Many of the activities and conversations throughout this training invite participants to share vulnerably from their own lives and experience. It is our priority that participants feel safe. Self-disclosure is always determined by each individual. No one should ever feel forced to share ANYTHING they don't want to. Please feel completely free to opt out of an activity or conversation based on your needs.

Focus:

Often, when left for spans of time to discuss or work in groups, it is tempting to indulge in irrelevant conversation. Many times this queues us into our own discomfort or avoidance of difficult and challenging work. We encourage participants to be attentive, especially when the temptation is great to be distracted.



TALKING CIRCLE GUIDELINES (AS USED BY INDIGENOUS ISSUES FORUM)

Humility:

For our time together we remember that we are all human beings here and equal in the eyes of Creator. Strive to be modest and unpretentious.

Respect:

Speak and listen with respect; take time to consider words carefully. Give full attention to the other participants. Consider those not in the room — ancestors, elders, children, loved ones, and enemies. Respect the process and facilitator, staying focused on the topic or question at hand.

ESTABLISHING NORMS AND WAYS OF BEING TOGETHER

Integrity:

We ask that we all speak from our own experiences and understanding with honor and honesty. Hold each other's stories and comments with integrity, in confidence, by not sharing them beyond the circle.

Generosity:

Be generous with your time. This is a time and space for all to share equally, not to control the conversation. Be generous with your emotions and support. Sometimes the topic is difficult and we may need each other.

Courage:

Allowing oneself to share in this style can be scary. Some of us are fearful of public speaking. Some of us are fearful of taking this opportunity to be equal with everyone. Some of us are fearful of giving up power and control, of a new process or of expressing our emotions. Most of us are nervous in some way or another. Take courage. You are not the only one. Be willing to risk.

Compassion:

Strive to walk with others and yourself with empathy and sympathy, remembering that we are all connected and in this together. Be a co-journeyer with others and be ready to support one another.

Fortitude:

Sometimes the topics and reason for circles can be extremely difficult. We will often need to be patient with others and practice tolerance and keep an open mind because you may hear difficult things that evoke strong emotions. At times we may need to embrace the uncomfortable and will need fortitude to do so. The circle process itself may be difficult if it is new to you. Be patient with yourself.

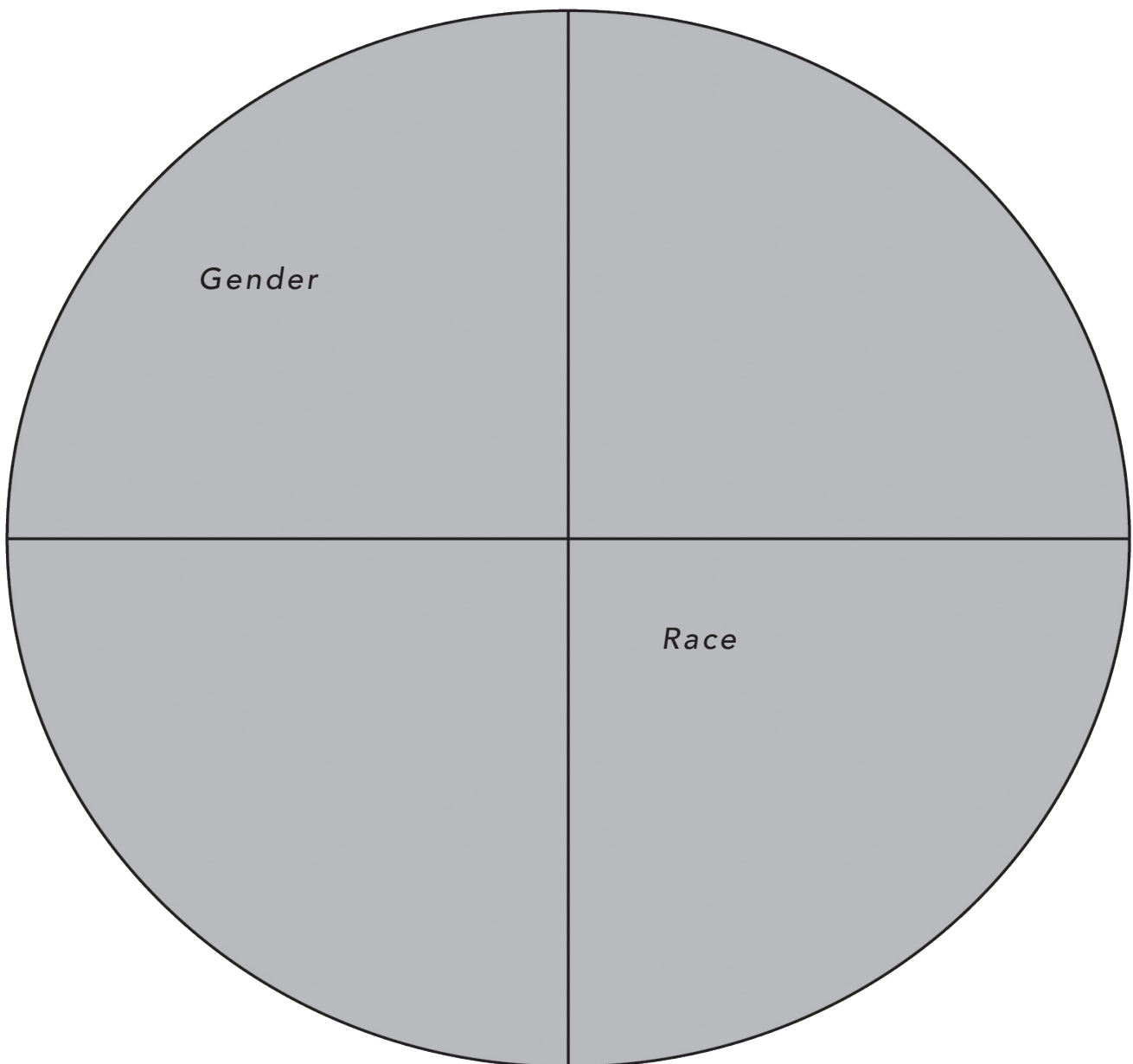
ESTABLISHING NORMS AND WAYS OF BEING TOGETHER

JOURNAL RESPONSE

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2. Shared Understandings

IDENTITY



Terms to Know

ableism - discrimination and prejudice against people living with disabilities

capitalism – an economic system based on competitive production which aims to maximize profits and accumulate material wealth through the commodification of every aspect of life (cultural, political, environmental, religious and social) (adapted from the Indigenous People's Solidarity Movement Ottawa)

classism - bias/prejudice against or in favor of people belonging to a particular social class

colonialism – the establishment of a state's sovereignty over a territory, including the imposition of social, religious, cultural, economic and political structures over the people living on that territory (adapted from the Indigenous People's Solidarity Movement Ottawa)

colorism – prejudicial or preferential treatment of same race people, based solely on their color (Alice Walker)

Doctrine of Discovery - a philosophical and legal framework dating to the 15th century that gave Christian governments moral and legal rights to invade and seize Indigenous lands and dominate Indigenous Peoples. The patterns of oppression that continue to dispossess Indigenous Peoples of their land today are found in numerous historical documents such as Papal Bulls, Royal Charters and U.S. Supreme Court rulings as recent as 2005. Collectively, these and other concepts form a paradigm of domination that has legitimated extractive industries that displace and destroy many Indigenous Peoples and other vulnerable communities, as well as harm the earth.

gender identity - a person's internal sense of being male, female, some combination of male and female or neither male or female (*Merriam Webster Dictionary*); which may or may not correspond with birth sex.

internalized oppression – people believing and behaving as if they are less than

SHARED UNDERSTANDINGS

because they don't belong to a dominant culture group (adapted from Iris DeLeon-Hartshorn, Tobin Miller Shearer and Regina Shands Stoltzfus, *Set Free: A Journey Toward Solidarity Against Racism*, 2001)

intersectionality -- Every person embodies multiple social locations (race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic class, religion, ethnicity, culture, ability, size, etc.). Intersectionality is how society empowers or disempowers people based on these multiple social locations. (Roots of Justice adapted from Kimberle Crenshaw)

machismo - male chauvinism. It should be noted that machismo is often invoked to emphasize how sexism is worse in Latino culture. We do not deny sexism exists in Latino culture, but it isn't worse or more prevalent than in the U.S. or among white/dominant culture. (adapted from Ada María Isasi-Díaz, *En la Lucha: Elaborating a Mujerista Theology*)

patriarchy – a social structure in which men hold power and domination over others, including women and non-human beings (from the Indigenous People's Solidarity Movement Ottawa)

power – the ability to influence or shape a reality (Chantelle Todman Moore)

privilege – a set of unearned benefits given to people who fit into a specific social group; the other side of oppression

racism – race prejudice + systemic misuse of power (Damascus Road)

sexism – a belief in the inherent superiority of one sex over all others and thereby its right to dominance (Audre Lorde) Male privilege + power (adapted from Damascus Road)

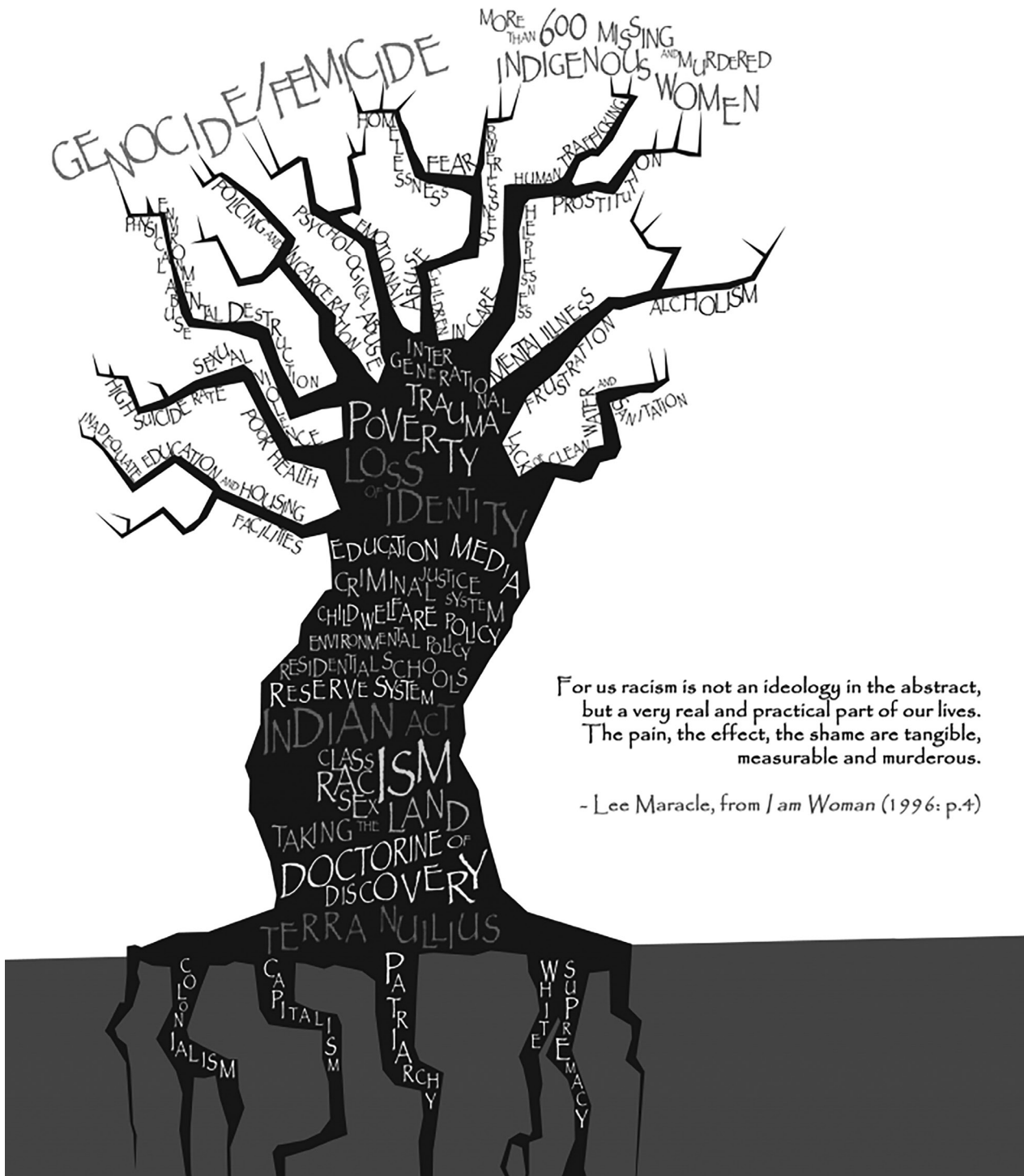
sexualized violence - any violence, physical or psychological, carried out through sexual means or by targeting a person's sexuality. This includes rape, sexualized assault, acquaintance assault or date rape, drug- or alcohol-facilitated sexual assault, manipulation and coercion (psychological violence), intimate partner violence, sexual harassment (unwanted sexual advances or obscene remarks), exploitation, anything that compromises a person's right to claim his/her sexuality without

SHARED UNDERSTANDINGS

violence, violence against a person who does not conform to gender stereotypes.

white supremacy – a Eurocentric belief and practice according to which white people are superior to non-whites (the Indigenous People's Solidarity Movement Ottawa)

Oppression Tree



SHARED UNDERSTANDINGS

JOURNAL RESPONSE

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3. Patriarchy in History

WHAT I LOVE ABOUT MY BODY

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PATRIARCHY IN HISTORY

How did this exercise make you feel?

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Have you considered this question before?

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Quotes for Discussion

“The Mother is the primal threat, generating in men, it seems, a matriphobia, a terror of maternal power.” (Taylor, 106)

“Male transcendence is defined as flight from and warfare against the realm of the mother, the realm of body and nature, all that limits and confines rather than being controlled by the human (male).” (Reuther, 75)

“Whereas the male is seen essentially as the image of the male transcendent ego or God, woman is seen as the image of the lower, material nature.” (Reuther, 54)

“The body with its passions should always be subjugated to the soul with its rationality. Sexual desire is a sign of the body’s rebellion against the rule of reason.” (Douglas, in describing Augustine’s theology, 35)

Western Christianity has often sexualized marginalized peoples, leaving “those who have been sexually demonized susceptible to being sacrificed even as it leaves its adherents vulnerable to becoming the sacrificers.” (Douglas, 68)

Heterosexism leads to “alienation from passionate and intimate relationships with persons of one’s own gender, and second, by alienation from one’s own gendered body and sexuality.” (Taylor, 115)

European color symbolism equates blackness with all things bad. But even more so, there is also a “denial and repression of whatever Europeans find threatening in themselves.” (Taylor, 140)

PATRIARCHY IN HISTORY

“Projection externalizes the sense of inadequacy and negativity from the dominant group, making the other the cultural ‘carrier’ of these rejected qualities. The dominant group can then rationalize exploitation as the right to reduce the other to a servile condition, abuse, and even kill them on the grounds of their lesser value.” (Reuther, 162)

A key theme pertaining to connections between oppressions is that of abstraction: “abstracting from the woman/mother in sexism, from the body and same-gender friendships in hetero-realism; from one’s self and finitude in racism; from the earth and a sharing of its resources in classism.” (Taylor, 243)

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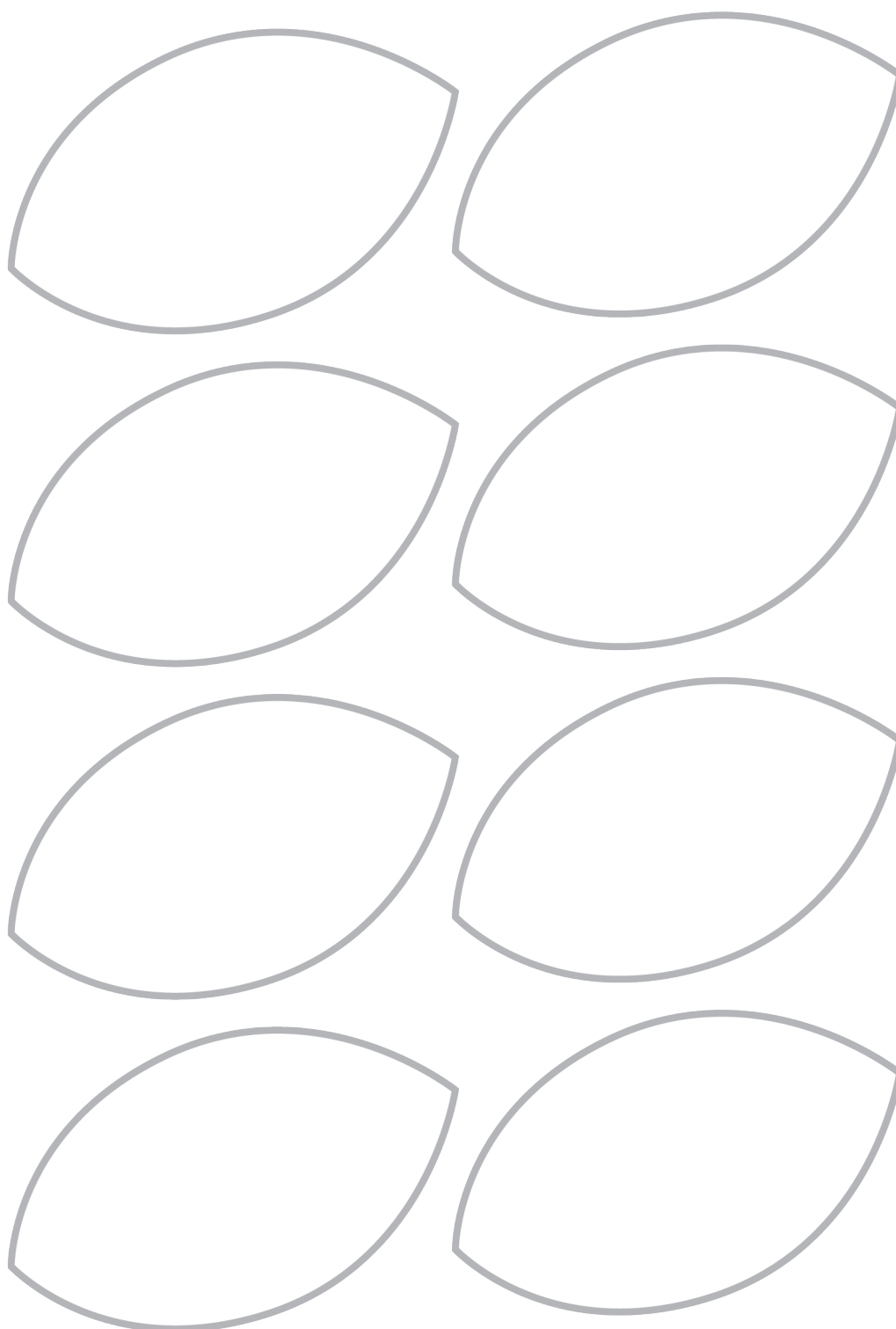
4. Patriarchy Is Alive and Well

JOURNAL RESPONSE TO VIDEO

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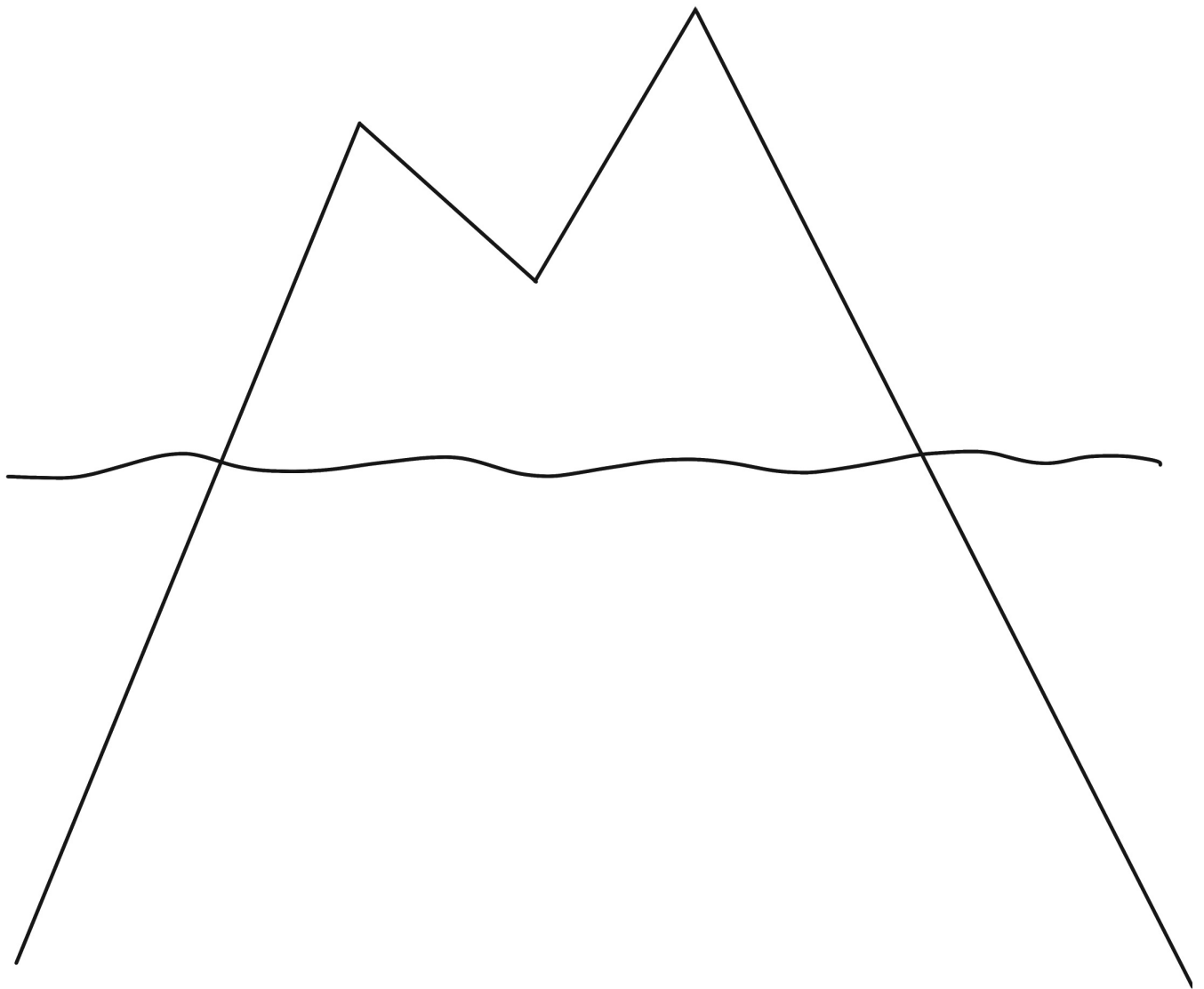
PATRIARCHY IS ALIVE AND WELL



PATRIARCHY AFFECTS US ALL — MEN TOO!

5. Patriarchy Affects Us All — Men Too!

PATRIARCHY ICEBERG



What are visible expressions of patriarchy and what elements are invisible?

PURPOSE OF AFFINITY GROUPS

- Affinity groups provide safer spaces for people to talk about how a certain dynamic and/or issue impacts them.
- Affinity groups allow for an opportunity for more open and honest dialogue away from those who may be perceived or experienced as participants/perpetrators of the dynamic and/or issue

We recognize the limitation of binary gender affinity groups, yet for the purposes of this exercise, we are asking you to participate in a group that correlates with the public bathroom you choose when there is not a neutral option. We understand that this means that those who do not identify as either male or female will have to choose to participate in a group discussion where they may not feel they can relate completely.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What are some messages our society tells us about what it means to be women?
- What are some messages our society tells us about what it means to be men?
- How do these messages shape us?
- Who benefits from these messages?
- How do these messages hurt us?

PATRIARCHY AFFECTS US ALL — MEN TOO!

JOURNAL RESPONSE

[illegible]

6. What Does the Bible Say?

KEY QUESTIONS:

- Who do you identify with in this/these passage(s)? Why?
- What messages do we receive through this/these passage(s)?
- What does it mean to be a man/woman based on this passage?
- Are the characters living fully into who they are? Why or why not?
What keeps them from it?
- What empowers them to live in the fullness of who they are?



Passages / Characters:

GENESIS 1

God creates the world in six days. Women and men are created in God's image and at the same time.

Additional Questions: How do women and men both reflect the image of God? Is order important in the story of Creation? Why or why not?

GENESIS 2

Genesis 2 states that it was not good for Adam to be alone and no other creature was found to be a fitting companion. God decided to create a "helper" suitable for him. In Hebrew the word *helper* is a strong, influential person rather than the English interpretation of "secondary."

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Who is helper here?

Additional Questions: What does it mean to be a helper?

PSALM 40 AND 70

Additional Question: Who is helper in these passages? How do you understand God's role as helper?

GENESIS 3

Eve has been used as a classic archetype of women.

Additional Questions: Describe Eve based on this passage. Name some characteristics that make her human. How has she been used as a symbol for what women should or should not be?

LUKE 1:26–56

Mary has been used as classic archetype of women.

Additional Questions: Describe Mary based on this passage. Name some characteristics that make her human. How has she been used as a symbol for what women should (not) be?

PSALM 131; ISAIAH 42:14, 49:15; ISAIAH 66:13; LUKE 13:34

While Jesus did refer to God as father, to perhaps emphasize a close and personal image of God (e.g. Psalms 68:5 and 103:13), Scripture also uses feminine imagery to describe God.

Additional Question: Is it possible to think of God as both father and mother, man and woman?

MARK 5:21–43

Jesus heals both the bleeding woman and the dead girl.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

LUKE 13:10–17

Jesus heals the crippled woman on the Sabbath.

JOHN 4:1–42

Jesus offers the woman from Samaria living water.

MATTHEW 15:21–28

Jesus is moved to act by the Canaanite woman.

JOHN 20:1–18

Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene.

SONG OF SOLOMON 4; 1 TIMOTHY 2:8–15;
1 PETER 3:1–7; PROVERBS 31:10–31

Additional questions: What do we learn about women's bodies from these passages?

ADDITIONAL REFLECTIONS:

- Was there a new insight that surprised you?
- Which passage challenged you during this activity?
- Which of these myths have you been told or have you told yourself in your own life?

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

JOURNAL RESPONSE

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A WOMAN OF STRENGTH

by Melissa Florer-Bixler

A woman of strength: who can find her? She is like a precious ruby.
When her spouse is forced to fight in the army, when she's all alone to work and take care of her family, he knows that she'll be all right.
She makes good things happen even when there doesn't seem to be enough.
She creates with her hands and starts her own business, trading for what she needs.
She gets up early to work. She makes sure everyone is fed and that the people who work for her know just what to do.
She decides what other kinds of business she wants to do; if she wants to plant fruit trees she does it herself.
She cinches strength around her like a belt and makes her arms strong.
She can tell what people want to buy because she understands the world she lives in and what people need. She's always paying attention.
She's aware that others need help because times are hard, and she reaches out to give to those who are hungry.
She has more than enough and she takes care of her family.
Her clothes are strength and dignity, she thinks about the future and laughs, even though times are so hard.
She's smart and kind. She knows what needs to be done in this time when a foreign army has taken over her country.
Her family can see that it makes her happy that she's figured out what to do. She shows everyone that God's people will survive and thrive, no matter what.
It's one thing to have it easy, to get by with life handing you everything you need.
But a woman like this, a woman who keeps going with God's promises, a woman who finds a way even when things are at the worst — she's the one you want to be like.

7. What Can I Do?

QUESTIONS

- What interventions have you experienced or heard in response to sexism and patriarchy within the spheres of work, church, community and society?
What have been the results?
- What can you do on an individual level when you encounter sexism to dismantle patriarchy interpersonally and structurally?
 - What can you do within your family to dismantle patriarchy?
 - What can you do in your congregation to dismantle patriarchy?
 - What can we do together within our church institutions and our communities to disrupt and dismantle patriarchy?

WHAT CAN I DO?

NOTES FROM CASE STUDY:

WHAT CAN I DO?

JOURNAL RESPONSE TO CASE STUDY EXERCISE

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8. God Calls Us to Act!

In your table group, discuss this question:

Where have you seen Beloved Community/shared power in church institutions?

Then, create a five-minute creative presentation that addresses the following questions:

- What systems are in place to make those spaces possible? What do you observe in these spaces? Describe the people participating in this kind of community.
- How do you feel in spaces like these?

Circle Process reflections (after table group discussion)

- What do you need to feel belonging and to participate fully in Beloved Community?
- What spiritual practices can provide care and nurture for the whole community?
- Where have you experienced Beloved Community?

JOURNAL RESPONSE

What are your takeaways from the Circle conversation?

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9. Closing and Sending

JOURNAL RESPONSE

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10. Additional Resources

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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