

OPENING PLENARY  
JULY 1, 2020

# TAKING UP OUR RESPONSIBILITY FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

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# WHY THIS? WHY NOW?

- We didn't arrive at this place overnight; we won't finish the work readily
- Identity and Theological underpinnings:
  - Creation is good—beloved children of God,
  - God identifies with the poor and oppressed,
  - baptismal covenant to seek Christ in all persons, strive for justice and peace, and respect the dignity of every human being
- Spiritual journey (not something to “master”)
- Not about “success” or doing everything “correctly”
- It's about stamina, courage, resilience to carry this



RACISM:

“A PREJUDICE AGAINST  
SOMEONE BASED ON RACE,  
WHEN THOSE PREJUDICES  
ARE REINFORCED BY  
SYSTEMS OF POWER.”

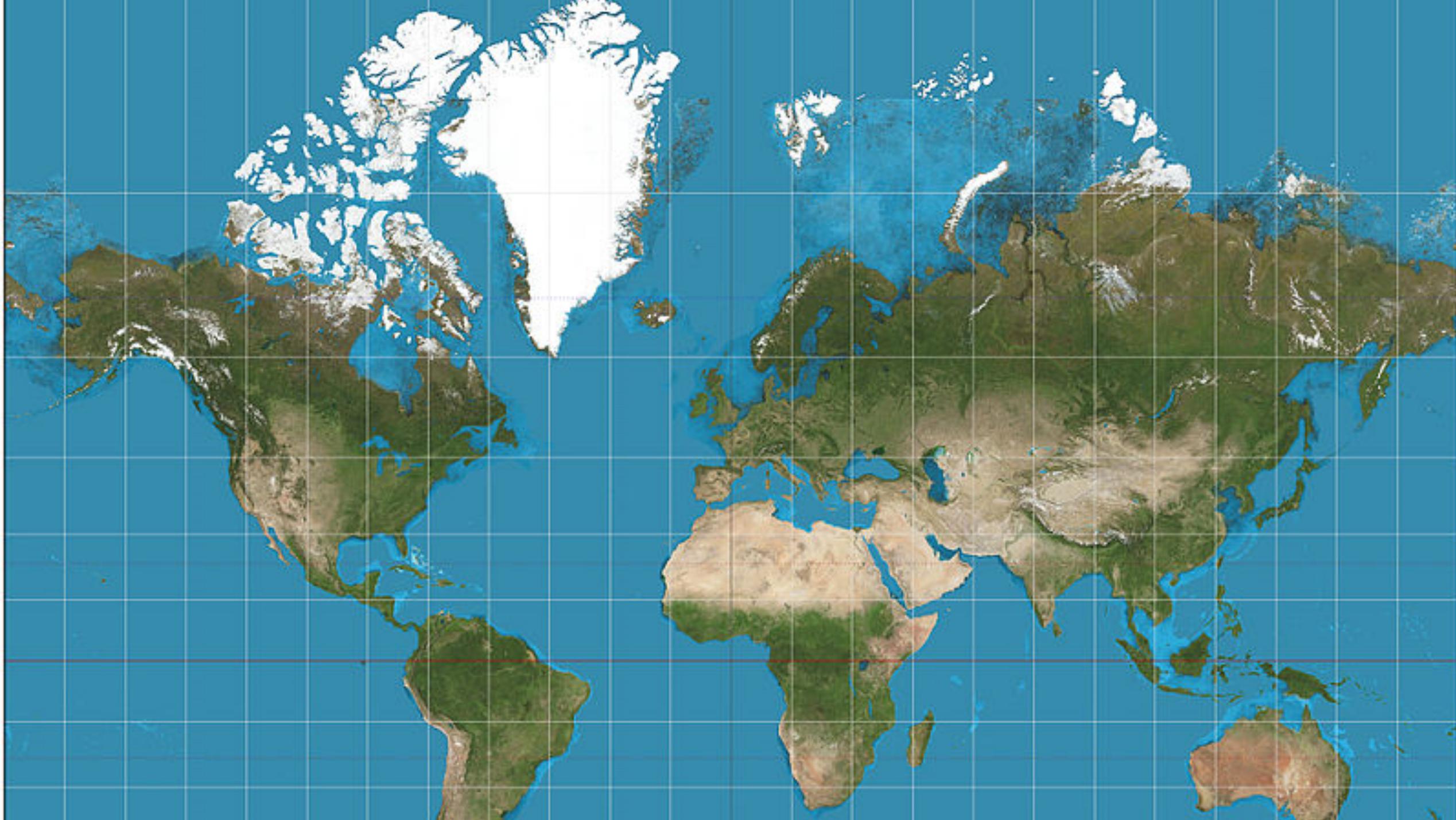
## A FEW IMPORTANT THINGS

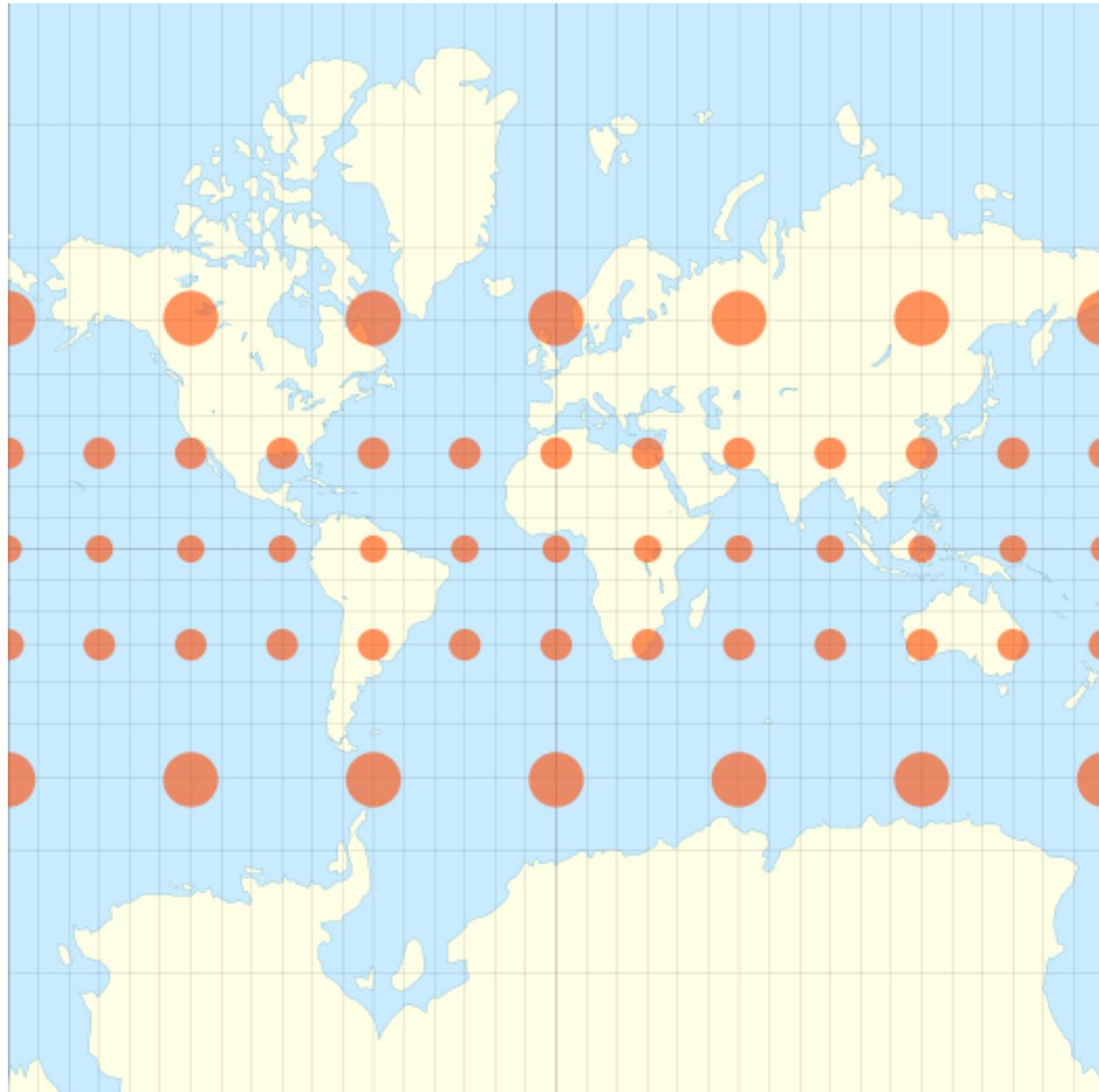
- We have been told again and again by people of color that this is white people's work to do.
- We will be guided by leaders, writers, activists, theologians who are POC.
- Our primary intention is to recognize how the system of racism shapes *our* lives, how we uphold that system, and how we might interrupt it.
- White people and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) people have different roles and responsibilities
  - For those of us who are white, we must also learn how racism impacts people of color.
  - People of color may reflect on how racism has impacted their lives and shaped their thinking. That may be painful.
- The emotional labor should not be borne by POC.

# RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO MAKE THIS PURELY AN INTELLECTUAL EXERCISE

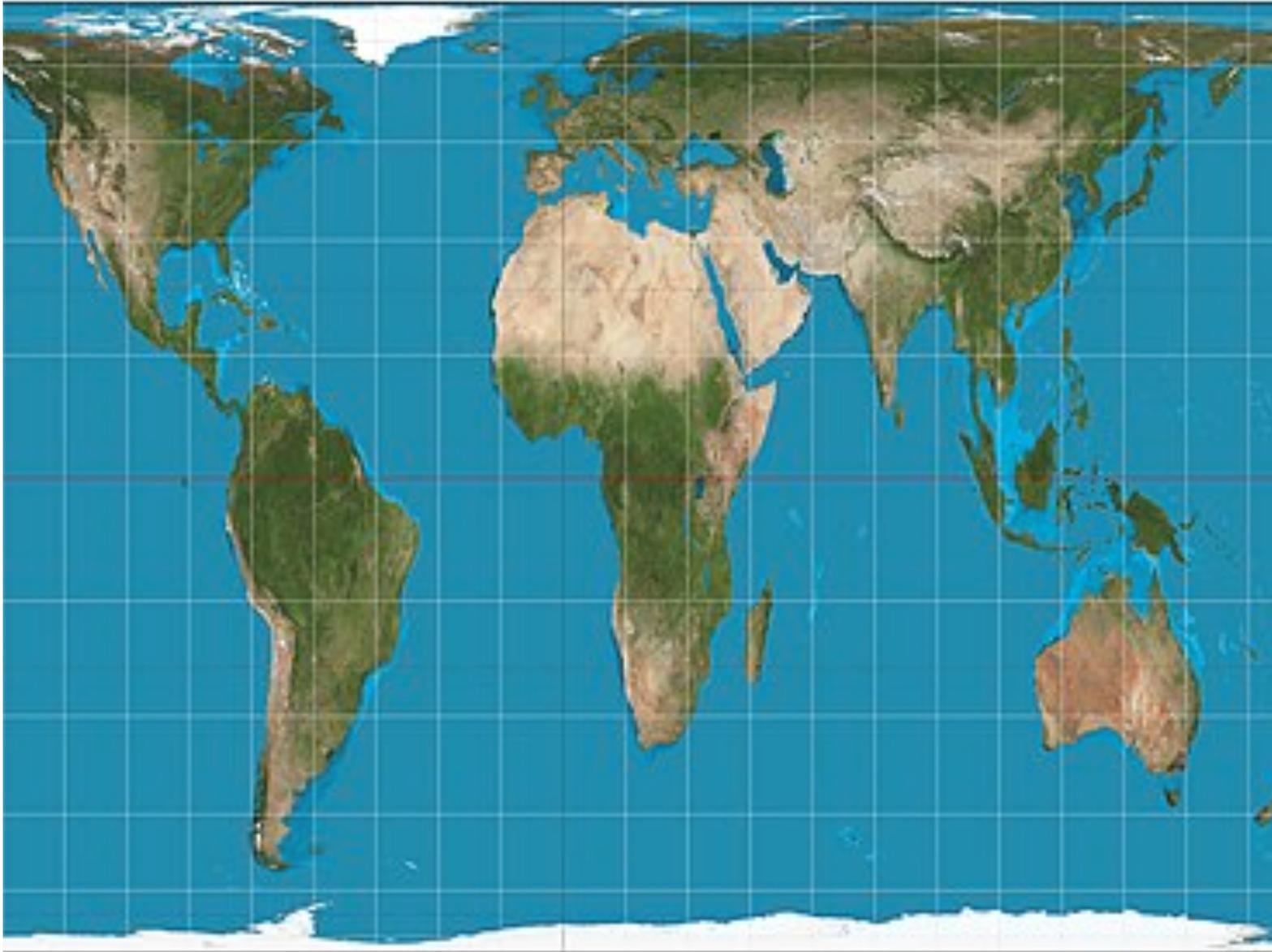
Transformation comes with work of the heart, gut, psyche, and spirit.

Reflect on our own experiences and engage in the internal dialogue through which we come to see our assumptions and biases that reinforce racism in our society

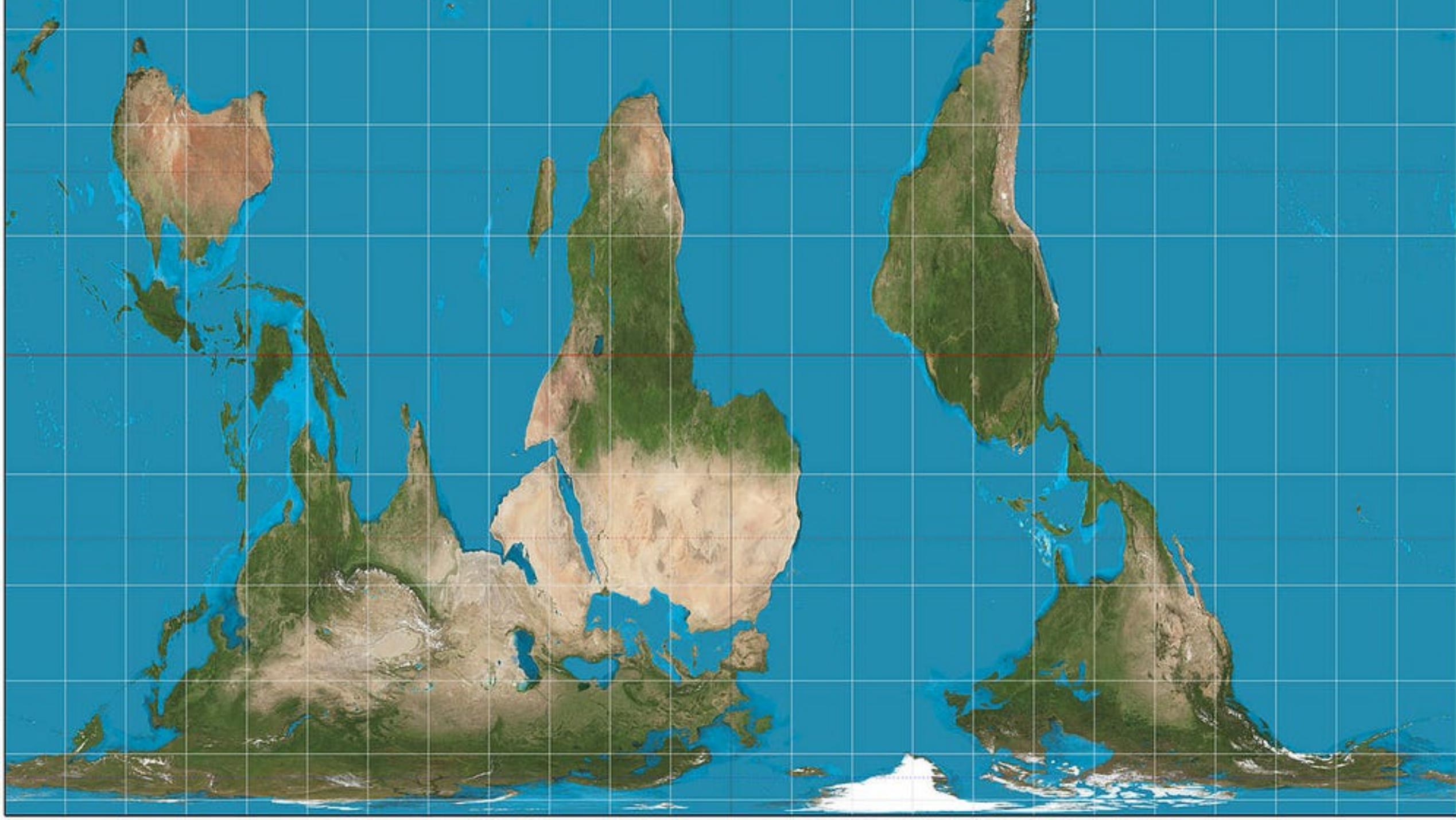




TISSOT'S  
INDICATRIX OF  
DEFORMATION



# GALL PETERS PROJECTION



## PRESUPPOSITIONS/ STARTING POINTS

- We all have stories to tell—share them respectfully, justly...
- We will not use racist statements or slurs, or idioms that have racist origins, and we will hold each other accountable to this standard
- We will not assume malice when ignorance (blind spots, bias, etc.) may explain one's failings
- The discomfort white people may feel when doing this work is not equivalent to POC' experience of racism. Avoid playing the victim...
- We want to avoid harming POC in our discussions, interactions, and in the course of our daily lives
- We will not look to POC as therapists or fixers, nor will we expect absolution from them for our sins of complicit racism
- Make space for POC to express fear, anger, hurt as they recount memories and experiences
- Avoid “success” frame of reference—consider “stamina, courage, resilience” as the touchstones for the journey

## BREAKOUT GROUPS

When did you first learn about the idea of race and the reality of racism?

How does it feel to talk about these things?

INITIAL THOUGHTS TO SHARE...

Session 1: What is Race? What is Racism?  
What is White Privilege?

Session 3: Some History of Racism in the  
United States

**29 July**

**26 Aug.**

**15 July**

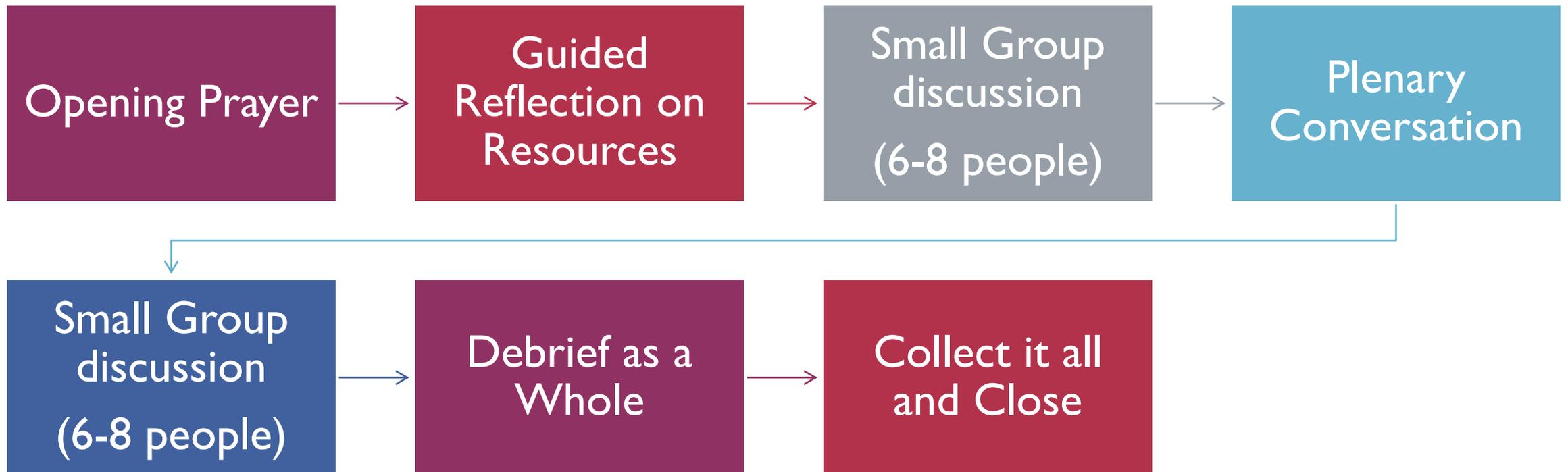
**12 Aug.**

Session 2: A Theology of Race, Racism, and  
Racial Justice

Session 4: Striving for Justice

## DESIGN OF THE FOUR-SESSION SERIES

# FLOW & FORMAT FOR EACH SESSION (90 MINUTES)



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# BREAKOUT GROUPS

- 
- Describe an experience in your life when you became aware of a bias or assumption you held about race.

Did anything change because of it?

# SUMMARIZING TONIGHT... AND NEXT STEPS

- Marathon, not a sprint; resilience, not success..
- Part of our ongoing and intentional spiritual formation (not a “training” that credentials us)
- Wherever we are on this spiritual journey, each person is welcome and their experience will be respected
- We do this work in community to encourage each other and hold each other accountable
- We commit to continue in it going forward

To register for the series,  
go to [saintmarks.org](http://saintmarks.org)