

What is the Beloved Community?

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Increasingly, the **BELOVED COMMUNITY PARADIGM** is emerging as a framework for all types of people and organizations – even those who are “not religious.”

For Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK), the goal of the Freedom Movement was not just civil rights, but building the **BELOVED COMMUNITY**.

“The goal is ...a radical redefinition of our relationships.” (MLK)

Let's look at the paradigm we live in now, and what might characterize the Beloved Community.

Our current paradigm limits itself to political views and realities

Beloved Community is Rooted in a religious or spiritual view that recognizes political realities

Our current paradigm divides the world into “us” and “them” and the purpose of power is to control “them”

In the Beloved Community there is only us – all of us and the purpose of power is to restore right relationship

In our current paradigm, “Rights” are the basis for social justice

In the beloved Community, “Right Relationships” are the basis

Our current paradigm puts “things” at the center

The Beloved Community puts “relationships” at the center

In our current paradigm, issues are seen as problems to be solved

In the Beloved Community issues reflect a way of life to be transformed

Our current paradigm reduces identity to status or role

The Beloved Community recognizes that social identity shapes, but does not limit, who we are. We are more than our social status, rank, or role.

Our current paradigm is “reactive”: driven by anger or fear

The Beloved Community is “proactive”: motivated by hope

In our current paradigm social justice is often for “other” people

In the Beloved Community we engage for one's own sake, too. "If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time, but if you have come here because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together." (MLK)

Our current paradigm focuses on changing the world out there

Beloved Community focuses on being the change we want to see

In our current paradigm justice = a system of rewards and punishments

In the Beloved Community Justice = "Love correcting everything that stands against love." (MLK)

Consider again *the Beloved Community*.

What in what is written here is most important to us or you personally?

What new questions might we have now?

What actions might we take in our congregation or community based on this?