

MENTOR GUIDE

MODULE 5: PURSUING BELOVED COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION

In this module, **Dr. Charles Montgomery Jr.** introduces a Vineyard definition for beloved community and explains how understanding your own ethnic and cultural story, as well as the stories of others, is essential to this work. Then, he teaches why pursuing beloved community is central to your work as a leader in the Vineyard and shares the Biblical principles for doing so.



This module's teaching will help you answer two central questions:

1. How has my cultural and ethnic story shaped the way I engage in multiethnic community?
2. Why is pursuing beloved, multiethnic community an essential part of my leadership?

SESSION 1: OUR STORY IN THE CONTEXT OF GOD'S STORY

Video Notes

- 1. Beloved Community can be described as a multi-ethnic group of disciples who pursue biblical oneness.** While initially coined by Dr. Josiah Royce in the early 20th century and made more popular by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, this is our Vineyard definition of the term, written to emphasize three things: ethnic diversity, discipleship, and unity rooted in scripture.
- 2. Beloved Community is not optional—it is central to Jesus' mission.** (John 17). The purpose of this is so the world may believe in Jesus as the reconciler, witness the Father's love, and be drawn into unity through our unity.
- 3. Jesus' prayer for unity deserves a response.** We spend so much time asking Jesus to answer *our* prayers. What if the Church got serious about answering *His*?
- 4. To pursue oneness, you need a biblical framework—**Scripture must shape our vision. As John Wimber said, the people of the Vineyard are “people of the book.”
- 5. Pursuing beloved community begins with understanding your story and the stories of others.** Your cultural and ethnic story deeply shapes how you approach this topic. It is essential to begin with the question: How does your cultural and ethnic experience shape who you are today?

SESSION 1: OUR STORY IN THE CONTEXT OF GOD'S STORY

Participant Reflection Questions

After watching the video, participants will answer or journal the following questions for reflection. Feel free to utilize these questions for discussion at your next Coaching Session.

- 1.** What were some common themes you heard in the stories shared in this video?
- 2.** What themes resonate with you?
- 3.** Are there themes in your story that have helped prepare you to pursue Beloved Community?

SESSION 1: ACTIVITY

Write out your own story.

SESSION 2: BIBLICAL FRAMEWORK FOR BELOVED COMMUNITY

Video Notes

- 1. Your true citizenship is in Heaven. Your calling as a citizen of Heaven is to make what's down here look like what's up there** (Revelation 7:9-10). The Kingdom of God is multiethnic and unified in worship. When we pray “Your Kingdom come...” we are asking for this vision to be made real on earth.
- 2. The reality on Earth does not look much like Heaven.** Earth is marked by division, polarization, and suspicion—especially around race and ethnicity. Words like “diversity” and “race” trigger division rather than unity. Yet, the U.S. is becoming more diverse; by 2045, minorities will be the majority. The Church must *learn how to navigate diversity from a biblical perspective.*
- 3. Leaders in the Vineyard are committed to pursuing beloved community.** Beloved Communities are multiethnic communities of disciples pursuing biblical oneness. Because Vineyard leaders are committed to being “people of the book,” the approach to beloved community is biblically grounded.
- 4. There are four biblical principles for pursuing beloved community.**
 - *God Creates and Cares Deeply About Ethnic Identities* (Genesis 1:28). God gave a cultural mandate to fill the earth with God’s image through cultural and ethnic diversity. Ethnicity is a gift from God, and diversity reflects the image of God and fulfills His purposes.
 - *God’s purposes were damaged by sin.* Sin damages God’s purposes, distorts God’s image, and produces division and pain.

- *God is on a mission to reconcile our divisions* (Ephesians 2:13-18; 3:10-11). Jesus came to break down dividing walls and create one new humanity. This reconciliation happens in two dimensions: vertical reconciliation is the reconciliation between man and God; horizontal reconciliation is reconciliation to one another. In this process, beloved community is a foretaste of eternal unity.
- *Jesus invites you into His plan.* You are invited to be with Him, be like Him, and to do what He did. In His ministry, Jesus engaged with Samaritans, women, and outsiders; taught love for neighbors who are different politically, culturally, and ethnically; and formed a community that reflected reconciliation in action.

5. You have a role in God's story. Beloved community is not just theological—it's practical, local, and personal. The Church is called to embody this mission. It starts with your church. It starts with you.

SESSION 2: BIBLICAL FRAMEWORK FOR BELOVED COMMUNITY

Participant Reflection Questions

- 1.** How does viewing your ethnic identity as a gift from God shift the way you understand yourself and others within the body of Christ? *Take time to reflect on how your background and story reflect God's image—and how you've viewed others' differences.*
- 2.** Where in your life—personally, relationally, or within your community—do you see evidence of sin distorting God's purposes for unity and reconciliation? *Consider how division or elevation of self shows up and how God might be inviting you into healing work.*
- 3.** Jesus calls His followers to “be with Him, be like Him, and do what He did.” What is one barrier in your life that keeps you from stepping into Jesus' reconciling work across ethnic or cultural lines? *Be honest: Is it fear, discomfort, indifference, or uncertainty?*
- 4.** What is one practical way you can join Jesus in making “down here” look more like “up there” in your own context? *This could involve a relationship, a ministry opportunity, or a shift in how your church or ministry embodies beloved community.*

ACTIVATION ASSIGNMENT

Put This Into Practice

- 1.** In your own words, write out why multiethnicity was/is an idea in the mind of God?
- 2.** Take time to research how many different ethnicities you can find in the Bible. What are some areas of harmony and areas of dissent? Consider any parallels you may see in Biblical times and post-modern times.
- 3.** Identify as many ethnicities as you can in your church, neighborhood, city, or state. Take time to write them down and pray for God's blessing on them.
- 4.** Do you know your ethnic origin? If not, consider taking a DNA test like Ancestry.com or 23andMe. Find out as much as you can about your ethnic heritage.
- 5.** Visit or shop in a grocery store owned (preferably) or frequented by an ethnicity different than you. Shop there several times and strike up conversations—notice what you are feeling as you do and what the Holy Spirit might be saying to you in these sacred moments.

MENTOR SESSION GUIDE

While the content we've provided will be impactful for participants, as a VLE mentor, the time you spend helping participants process will be transformative. Please use this time to make thoughtful observations and be prepared to speak into their lives. This time together will provide many opportunities to have an "ICNU (I See In You) Conversation", which will be catalytic in their growth and development! Here is a sample agenda you might consider using for your time together:

Connection (5-10 minutes). This is a great opportunity for small talk, to warm up the conversation. You can ask how their week has been, or if they have anything exciting coming up.

Celebration (5-10 minutes). Ask them if they have seen God do something in their lives or ministry in the past two weeks that they'd like to share. This is an opportunity for you to affirm and reinforce the good growth that is happening.

Coaching Conversation (40 minutes). See Coaching Conversation Section on the next page. This portion will be specific to each module.

Care & Prayer (10-20 minutes). As you wrap up your time together, make space for the work of the Holy Spirit. This could look different every time, especially if you are meeting with an individual versus a group. If you are with an individual, you could ask if the Holy Spirit has brought anything to the surface for them, and then pray into that. If you are with a group, this might be an opportunity for a hot seat, or for participants to break off into pairs and pray for each other.

Closing Communication (5 minutes). This is the time to highlight the next module, important church events, or announcements, etc.

MODULE 5: COACHING CONVERSATION

Module 5: Pursuing Beloved Community calls leaders to embrace the biblical vision of a diverse, reconciled family where every story is valued and every person belongs. This module helps participants reflect on their ethnicity, identity, and story, and how those elements shape their view of community. Grounded in Kingdom theology, this is an invitation to participate in the ongoing work of healing, justice, and unity—starting with awareness and humility.

1. First, let's begin with your own story.

- Share how your personal background, culture, or story has shaped how you engage in community.
- What have you learned—and unlearned—about inclusion, identity, and belonging?

2. Next, invite participants to reflect on the Activation Assignment by asking:

- What did you notice as you explored your own story and the influences that shaped you?
- Was there a moment in this module that brought some agitation, conviction, clarity, or encouragement?
- How has your understanding of Beloved Community grown or shifted?

3. Now, let's unpack a few key themes together. Use these discussion prompts:

- Identity and formation: How does knowing your own story help you understand others more fully?
- Biblical reconciliation: What does it look like to pursue unity without ignoring real pain or difference?

- Hospitality and belonging: Where are you being invited to extend hospitality—to make room?

4. Take some time to draw out how this applies to our leadership. Ask:

- Where is God calling you to grow as a builder of Beloved Community?
- What's one relationship, habit, or ministry culture shift you could begin to change?
- How can you disciple others toward deeper empathy, equity, and shared leadership?

5. Move into prayer and ministry.

- Create space for lament, listening, or confession if needed.
- Take some time for participants to name if they need the Spirit to heal wounds, expand compassion, build unity, etc, and pray specifically for these needs.
- Encourage participants to pray for courage to build communities marked by justice, humility, and love.