

FULL SERVICE



CHURCH



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Integrating Life and Ministry: Ministry IS Life

CBC's full-service approach to ministry is based on the following principles:

- Discipleship is to be *intentional*.
- Discipleship is to be both, *proactive* and *reactive*.
- Discipleship is to be *lifelong*.
- Discipleship is to be *church-based*.

At each stage we aim to provide three things:

- 1) Instruction targeted to the opportunities and challenges ahead
- 2) Support from those in and past this phase
- 3) Resources for ongoing development – videos, blog posts, podcasts, counseling journal articles, books

The typical life goes through the following stages and faces the listed issues:*

Birth (0-12 Months)

- Fear
- Support from Parents
- Nurturing
- Finances for Childcare
- Marriage Dynamic
- Social Life
- Personality of Baby
- Home Management
- Identity Crisis/Image
- Post-Partum, Fatigue, Depression
- Loss of Freedom, Added Responsibilities

Toddler (1-3 Years)

- Discipline
- Working Mother/Childcare
- Compare and Contrast w/ Other Children/Parents

Kindergarten (4-6 Years)

- Separation
- Peer Interaction, Relational Issues
- Spiritually More Aware
- Parent Groups Form, Support and Relational Dynamic
- Schooling Options
- Schedule – School and Extracurriculars

* I've solicited from CBC Ministry Coordinators who serve infants, retirees, and everyone in between for their thoughts on the challenges faced at every stage of life. Some of those suggestions will be added to these lists.

Grade School (1st thru 5th Grade)

- Academic Comparisons and Struggles
- Learning Disabilities, Behavioral Issues, Medication
- Schedules
- Peer Pressure
- Societal Exposure: Friends, Culture, Social Media
- Parents Living Vicariously Through Children

Middle School (6th thru 8th Grade)

- Technology
- Social Media
- Independence
- Potentially Less Parental Involvement
- Opposite Sex (Purity)
- Same Sex Attraction
- Dating
- Peer Pressure Intensified
- Body Image
- Need to Systematize Truth
- Choosing My Religion

High School (9th thru 12th Grade)

- Academic Pressure Increases
- College Choices
- Decision Making
- Social Station Fixed (Personal Identity)
- Expectations
- Ministry Role
- Leaving Childhood
- Sports, Extracurriculars
- Peer Pressure Revisited
- Jobs
- Independence Increased (Driving, Working)
- Adding a Car, Separate Vehicles
- Need for Worldview and Apologetics
- Potentially Much Less Parental Involvement
- Opposite Sex (Purity)
- Same Sex Attraction
- Dating Revisited

College/Career (18-25)

For the Young Adult:

- Independence: College, Jobs, Career
- Decision Making
- Serving the Lord, Ministry Priorities
- Sexual Struggles
- Keeping the Faith
- Need for Intensified Worldview and Apologetics
- Friends, Social Life
- Marriage, Ministry Partner, Training for Marriage

For the Parent:

- Finances
- Empty Nest
- Loneliness
- Not Needed
- Ministry Opportunities May Increase
- Marriage Issues – May Need to Reacquaint

Marriage

- Jobs
- Maintaining Home
- Adjustment to Living with Another (Friends, Finances, Calendar, Priorities, Ministry, Routine)
- Roles/Identity as a Couple
- New Ministry (Together Now?)
- Finances
- Training for Parenthood
- Expectations
- Physical Relationship

Singles

- Career
- Purpose (Ministry), Need to See Church as Family
- Marriage Preparation
- Contentment
- Finances
- Priorities
- Need for Targeted Shepherding

Middle Years of Marriage/Parenting (30-40)

- Young Children, Struggle with Being Child-Centered
- Stress on Marriage
- Less Ministry Commitment Due to Children
- Struggle to Integrate Children and Ministry
- Over-Commitment with Extracurriculars
- Financial Stress
- Competition with Other Families
- Over-Prioritizing Physical House Appearance
- Discontentment: Job, Physical Appearance, Spouse

Midlife (40-60)

- Midlife “Crisis” – Not Where Wanted/Thought Would Be
- Failing Health
- Career (Progress vs. Stagnation)
- Preparing for Retirement
- Empty Nest
- Relationship with Spouse
- Relationship with Adult Children
- Finances
- Grandparenthood
- Aging Parents

Seniors (60+)

- Retirement
- Health
- Attitude
- Purpose, Ministry
- Death of Spouse
- Lack of Social/Ministry Involvement
- Need to Mentor
- Finances
- Priorities

Being and Doing: Redeemed to Reign

As has been shown, the Bible is clear that the church’s disciple-making task requires that people are born again and then mature, as measured by conformity to the image of Christ:

Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.
(Matthew 28:19-20)

Those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.
(Romans 8:29)

He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. (Colossians 1:28)

The image, now lost and in need of restoration, was originally announced and explained in the opening chapters of Scripture. Genesis 1:27 says that “God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” And the uniqueness of his image-bearers is underscored with chapter two of Genesis devoted to an elaboration of day six, which describes the creation of Adam (2:7), the work God assigned him to do (2:15), the warning and opportunity God placed before him (Gen 2:16–17), the woman God made to aid him in his work (2:18–22), and the joy and intimacy Adam and Eve had for and with one another (2:23–25). Though God pronounced all his work “good” (cf. 1:10, 12, 18, 20, 25), he applied the description “very good” only after his image-bearers were created.

We learn something of what the *imago Dei* means from the particular words used for it in Gen 1:26: “Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness” (NASB 1995). The word *image* refers to “representation.” The God who is spirit creates a representative in physical form. Vlach explains,

Just as an ancient king would place an image of himself in an area of his realm to show his sovereignty, God makes man in his image to represent him in the newly created world. Thus, “image” has kingship implications. Yet in this case these representations are living, breathing human beings, not lifeless statues. While God is the King, he created man as a king, a vice-regent and mediator over the creation. The term “likeness” indicates man is in relationship with God; he is a son of God. Because man is a son of God, he is able to represent God. So sonship is closely connected to rulership.¹

The assignment that humanity received in Adam was to serve as God’s vice-regents on earth. Adam was told to “be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground” (Gen 1:28). This “dominion mandate” was given by the King of creation to all humanity. That is, this mandate was not required of Adam and Eve alone, but rather as they are “fruitful,” “increase in number,” and “fill the earth,” it will be taken up by their posterity.

The Hebrew word for “rule” (*rādāh*) in Gen 1:28 is the same as that used in Ps 110:2 of the future reign of the Messiah: “The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion, saying, ‘Rule in the midst of your enemies!’” The word for “subdue” (*kābas*) speaks of the work of a king (cf. 2 Sam 8:11).² Vlach summarizes well the connection between the *imago Dei* and dominion: “This relationship between the image of God and ruling over the creation is so close that some have concluded that the image of God is the function of ruling. But the function of ruling is probably a *consequence* of man being in the image of God. The main point is that man is God’s image bearer created to rule the earth on God’s behalf.”³

¹ Vlach, Michael, *He Will Reign Forever: A Biblical Theology of the Kingdom of God* (n.p.: Lampion House, 2020), chap. 4, Kindle.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

So, we are made in God's image to rule on His behalf, and we are restored to His image to do the same. Redemption is for relationship with God, but also for ruling and reigning. In the future "restoration of all things" (Acts 3:21 NASB) we will image Him perfectly and so be able to "reign with Him" (2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 3:21; 20:4, 6).

This raises a profound question regarding present Christian discipleship: In what way do Christians rule for God *now*? The Dominion Mandate of Genesis 1:28 is still applicable, but given the subsequent Fall and intrusion of sin, in what way is it manifest? Is all work that is done ethically and in at least some way is for the glory of God, equal? Is a Christian CEO's speech to shareholders just as important as a gospel sermon? Is pastoral or missionary work more important than other endeavors? Since most are neither pastors nor missionaries, can our work nevertheless be seen as sacred? The answers to these can only be found in a clear understanding of how the redeemed rule, now, and in words of Jonathan Leeman that understanding includes the following:

God has authorized the church as an organized collective with a priestly authority to do a priestly job, while he has authorized every member of the church with a kingly authority to do a kingly job. The first yields a narrow mission; the second yields a broad one.

Broadly, God sends every member of a church to do what Adam failed to do: represent him in kingly fashion as his dominion-establishing, God-imaging "sons" ... Narrowly, God sends the church-as-organized-collective to make disciples or citizens [of the Kingdom] ...

In a phrase, the broad mission is *to be* disciples or citizens, the narrow mission is *to make* disciples or citizens ... [This] makes sense of two different ways we use the word "church" ...

Sometimes we use the word "church" to refer to all of the members: who they are, and what they do throughout the week. Sometimes we use it to refer to those members as an organized collective, capable of doing certain things together that they cannot do apart... [There is a necessary] distinction between *church-as-organized-collective* and *church-as-its-members*, and each of these possesses a distinct authorization.

The organized church ("church-as-organized-collective") trains and sends members ("church-as-its-members") into their work; members use their gifts and abilities to further their church's work.