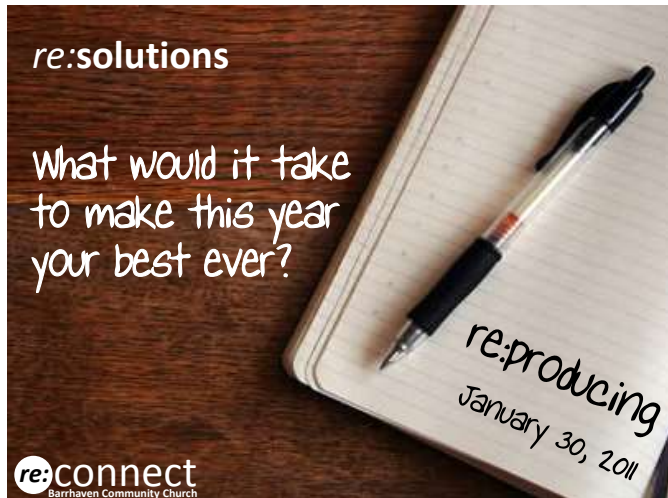


# re:solutions – re:producing

Reconnect – January 30, 2011

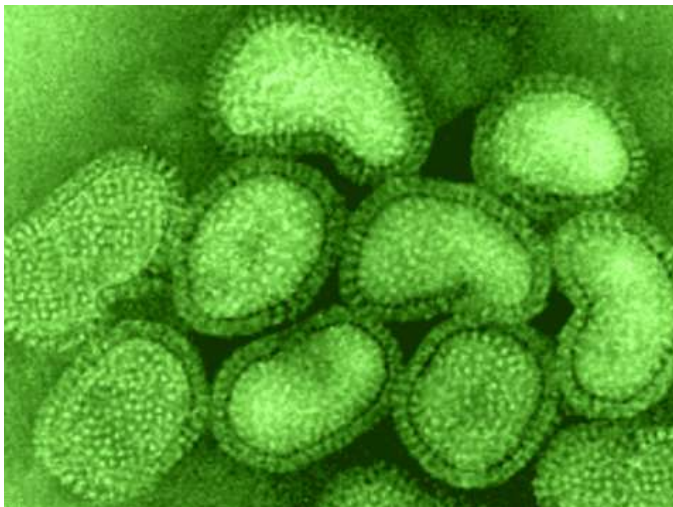


**Text:** Proverbs 3:1-13; John 12:23-25

**Key Thought:** A transformed life resolves to pass along what it is continuing to learn at any cost.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do and he will direct your paths. (Proverbs 3: 5-6, NLT)

## **Intro: It's that time of year again... (viruses)**



- It's that time of year again... where everyone gets sick
- Anyone sick here right now? Anyone NOT been sick this winter? What's your secret?
- Lots of ways to get sick, but one of them is through viruses – viruses that spread through human contact, through the air, through getting sneezed on by your kids
- Viruses are nasty things – way too small to see, they get inside you and take over your cells, and try to turn your body into a virus factory before they jump on to the next spot
- Everything about a virus is reproduction – to keep it going – which is why our bodies can only at best play defence and try to get rid of them – otherwise, there's just too much
- And even if a virus doesn't take you over, it hitches a ride on you – you become a carrier and infect other people
- Obsessed with reproducing itself – everything in its life cycle goes into that

## Reproduction – what we are, who we are



- Reproduction is a funny thing – and we learn when we’re kids – kids love baby animals – cats have kittens, dogs have puppies, horses have colts, and you read the same book OVER and OVER again
- Dogs don’t have baby horses, and ducks don’t have baby kittens – like reproduces like – you reproduce who you are, your DNA, a version of yourself – and then you hope really hard that they turn out to be better behaved than you were at their age
- We are made to reproduce – we do it even when we might not want to – and science spends a lot of money and time trying to stop people from reproducing – or restart them – or allow them to again – we are reproduction obsessed, either pro- or anti-
- We biologically reproduce not who we are, but what we are – our kind – but then generally we’re not satisfied with that – we want the little person to know about their family and friends, so we have pictures on the fridge, and stories to tell, and people to come and visit once or twice a year – because we want our children to be connected to who we are, not just what we are
- And eventually, we want our children to stand on our shoulders – to succeed, to go past what we’ve been able to accomplish, to be happier, healthier, smarter, the whole nine yards – and of course, support us in our old age
- We reproduce what we are

## Reproduction – biospiritual?

- And that’s not just true on the physical level – it seems to be built in to the way that God has made us, because it’s true on a spiritual level as well
- We’ve been talking about values that can transform your life, and we’ve been looking at the Bible’s book of ancient wisdom called Proverbs along the way
- Proverbs is a book meant to pass along wisdom – spiritual DNA, if you will – so that what has been gained by one generation, in terms of understanding of life and God and people, is not lost to the next one – that the knowledge and the wisdom endures and continues to help on down the line

- Solomon, the writer, was according to the Bible “the wisest man who had ever lived” – he had asked God for wisdom as a teenager, green as grass and having to take over his father David’s kingdom – and God, who had offered Solomon ANYTHING he had wanted as a coronation present, was thrilled to give Him wisdom in spades
- He spends much of his life learning, observing, writing, and interacting, and letting knowledge and wisdom build
- But now that he’s done that, he wants to pass his wisdom on to the next generation – he doesn’t want what he knows to be forgotten when he hangs up the crown – his goal is continuity, to pass on a legacy of God-given wisdom and knowledge
- III. – when someone leaves their job – that knowledge is normally gone – and you want to keep any part of it you can – we keep books of how to do stuff at the bank, and to get someone’s book when they leave is a good thing – because their knowledge is now benefitting you
- To be wise is one thing – but true wisdom is being able not only to live it but to pass it on – because we are all reproducing something
- The section of the Bible we’re looking at in the final part of this series is optimal for Solomon – it’s a distillation of what he has learned with his life – he’s passing it down, and the idea is that it will continue to be passed down, to be lived out, to be improved on and that it will continue to bring positive results and good things from generation to generation
- So this morning we’re going to have a double focus – first, to look at the lesson, and then second, to ask ourselves how we can pass this along – how it could be reproduced through us

### **Read/Explain Text: Proverbs 3:1-11**

**My child, never forget the things I have taught you. Store my commands in your heart, for they will give you a long and satisfying life. Never let loyalty and kindness get away from you! Wear them like a necklace; write them deep within your heart. Then you will find favour with both God and people, and you will gain a good reputation.**

- this reminds of Jesus – “grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and people”
- “putting on a necklace” – being bound by something, letting something else other than your own wants/needs/desires/senses drive your life – let them soak into your life and become part of you – something permanent, that you could never shake

**Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do and he will direct your paths.**

- this is the key to understanding the rest – everything that follows in this section is riffing on this theme – to leave behind conventional wisdom, or common sense, or “what everyone else is doing” or even “what works” and look for God’s input on every situation, following Him and His Word – different areas of life are coming up

**Don't be impressed with your own wisdom. Instead, fear the Lord and turn your back on evil. Then you will gain renewed health and vitality.**

- Ego and self-centeredness – your thoughts and perspectives, your desires and wants

**Honour the Lord with your wealth and with the best part of everything your land produces. Then he will fill your barns with grain, and your vats will overflow with the finest wine.**

- Your money and resources and possessions

**My child, don't ignore it when the Lord disciplines you, and don't be discouraged when he corrects you. For the Lord corrects those he loves, just as a father corrects a child in whom he delights.**

- Hard times fitting into “the movie of your life” and what you envision your happy endings and soundtracks and montages to be

**Happy is the person who finds wisdom and gains understanding. Proverbs 3:1-13, NLT**

- The message of Proverbs – “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” – in other words, a summary/transition statement, summing up what has just been taught
- Imagine this kind of life – a life that is freed up from what tangles us up in ourselves, to be lived for others, to truly make a difference in our neighbourhoods and in our world – a noble life, a strong life, a life of passion and truth and purity – that's the kind of life I want – at least, on my good days

### **From doing it to passing it along**



- Wisdom video – Zuckerman – went around the world to celebrities 60+, asking for wisdom, and this was part of the result
- He is trying to help them pass along their wisdom – what is the sum total of what they've lived, and loved, and learned along the way? What can they leave behind for the rest of us to learn from their lives?
- And when you get to that age, you are looking to pass it along...
- who are you passing along your life to?

- Business examples – mentoring – but we don't do it and most businesses don't see it as a priority, or the people within them are too threatened to do so – so someone retires and the next day, no-one knows where the keys are kept or the code to the panel – but the best businesses develop their people and spend all kinds of time and treasure recruiting them, training them, developing them and empowering them to be better and better
- That's what God wants to see in you and I – after all, in the Old Testament, God gave them a book and said "Read it" – the Torah – the teaching
- But in the New Testament, Jesus says, "Go tell people" – suddenly things go from being stationary to mobile, from being attractational to missional, from being protect the core to spread out and go go go
- You and I listened to those little chunks of wisdom in that video – and honestly, some of it was CRAP – the back of a paperback novel bad – and imagine, that with the Spirit of God in you, all of His wisdom – because Jesus is called in the Bible the wisdom and power of God in First Corinthians chapter 1 – is available to you through His guiding AND through the pages of the Bible – and yet, are we making use of it in our lives? Are we being transformed? Will this year be better than the last... (Crowes)
- And are we passing along the wisdom that we are receiving? Are we reproducing? If so, how and in who? Family? Great... but if family was all that was needed, the message of Jesus never would have spread around the world – there has to be more to it than that
- Friends? yes, for sure – but then even past that, our acquaintances, even our enemies should be seeing something different in us, though they might not be able to put their finger on what it is

### **Not reproducing?**

- The thing is, if we're not reproducing, then we're impotent – which is not a nice word in any context – it means a lack of power, a lack of potential, a lack of the ability to change something, a lack of strength
- We reproduce what we are – what God has done or not done in us – and we do it without even trying – but if we're not passing along the good stuff, then we have an impotence problem
- To reproduce takes sacrifice – it takes determination – it takes the giving of ourselves past what we would normally need to do
- So who are you being reproduced in? Is Christ being reproduced in you? And are you passing that along to other people in your life? Who is better for having you there? Who is learning from your example? Because no matter who we are, we have something that we can teach – remember Lincoln's quote, "Every man is in some way my better, and that makes every man my teacher, in that I may learn something from them"
- Jesus' life has been reproduced time after time after time – but He did it through his death and sacrifice, and those who have passed it down to us have done the same
- And if we are to continue, to not break the chain, but continue to see lives changed as a result of His death and resurrection, then we have to be those who will transform and reproduce as well – to pass along what we've learned of the Bible, to pass along what we've learned of life, to pass along our values and our experience and our love for God – teaching and being taught, and on it goes

## Reproducing – value



- Here's what our website has to say about this value of reproducing – which by the way is one of our shared Reconnect values:

### **Reproducing: "Helping to start and nurture new communities, in order to multiply our effectiveness in showing the love of Christ"**

#### **Looks like: Entrepreneurs**

New communities of God's people start with a person who gets an idea from God - a mental picture of what should be and what could be. At the right time, God will then surround that person with others, and community will naturally begin. However, it starts with a person who is so captured by a God-given vision that they are willing to risk and sacrifice everything for it to come true, without settling for less along the way. We will look for those people that God has designed to be catalysts for new communities of faith, and we will mentor, train and walk alongside them as they do so.

#### **Looks like: "Small is beautiful"**

Life is made meaningful through relationships, but when a community grows too large, relationships are more easily lost or diminished. Choosing to start new communities alongside our own, rather than merely grow a single one, will help our relationships to stay strong and what we do to stay meaningful and local. As these small communities work together as a family, relationships will be strengthened and the cycle will repeat itself. We will take advantage of our size and work to ensure that we remain healthy as we do.

#### **Reproducing:**

- the Bible stubbornly maintains that having a relationship with God – a transforming, committed relationship that affects the rest of our lives – is the key to experiencing true success and joy in the rest of our lives – to “getting everything else right”
- Proverbs – 3x – “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”
- No matter your degrees, or your IQ points, or your mad video game skillz, it comes down to having an ever-increasing space for God in your life – yikes!
- You can't really be responsive without God – sure, you can be helpful and sacrifice – but what you show the rest of the world will be lacking, big time in the centre of YOU
- It takes **resolve** to be responsive before God – the sticky part of the word “resolution” – or re:resolution, as we've been saying... it takes being “resolute”

## Key Thought:

# TAKE IT HOME:

**A transformed life resolves to pass along what it is continuing to learn at any cost.**

The time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory. The truth is, a kernel of wheat must be planted in the soil. Unless it dies it will be alone – a single seed. But its death will produce many new kernels – a plentiful harvest of new lives. Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who despise their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.



– Jesus in John 12:23-25, NLT

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## Conclusion: short-sighted? (J.C. Ryle)

- What can I do to help you serve God? Not just like the idea of Him... not just be open to Him... but to get you to give Him your all? To put your life in His hands?
- Intro: J.C. Ryle – bishop of Liverpool, England back roughly 150 years ago – passionate about true faith that made a difference in people’s lives, especially those who weren’t “churchy people” for church

**Ryle’s questions: (from 100 years ago) (chapter 1 of Practical Religion) – from 1878! (133 years ago)**

- 1) Do we ever think about our souls at all?
- 2) Do we ever do anything about our souls?
- 3) Are we trying to satisfy our consciences with a mere formal religion?
- 4) Have we received the forgiveness of our sins?
- 5) Do we know anything by experience of conversion to God?
- 6) Do we know anything of practical Christian holiness?
- 7) Do we know anything of enjoying the means of grace?
- 8) Do we ever try to do anything good in the world?

**9) Do we know anything of living the life of habitual communion with Christ?**

Let it be distinctly understood that union with Christ is one thing, and communion is another. There can be no communion with the Lord Jesus without union first; but unhappily there may be union with the Lord Jesus, and afterwards little or no communion at all... Union is the common privilege of all who feel their sins, and truly repent, and come to Christ by faith, and are accepted, forgiven, and justified in Him. Too many believers, it may be feared, *never get beyond this stage!*

...Communion with Christ is the privilege of those who are continually striving to grow in grace, and faith, and knowledge, and conformity to the mind of Christ in all things... Union is the bud, but communion is the flower: union is the babe, but communion is the strong man. He that has union with Christ does well; but he that enjoys communion with Him does far better.

**(J.C. Ryle, Practical Religion, pp.11-13)**

**10) Do we know anything of being ready for Christ’s second coming?**

That He will come again the second time is as certain as anything in the Bible. The world has not yet seen the last of Him... He will come to raise the dead, to change the living, to reward His saints, to punish the wicked, to renew the earth, and take the curse away, to purify the world... and to set up a kingdom where sin shall have no place, and holiness shall be the universal rule....

What have we really got from Christ? And what do we know of Him? And what do we think of Him? Are we living as if we long to see Him again, and love His appearing? - Readiness for that appearing is nothing more than being a real, consistent Christian. It requires no man to cease from his daily business. The farmer need not give up his farm, nor the shopkeeper his counter... Each and all cannot do better than be found doing his duty, but doing it *as a Christian*, and with a heart packed up and ready to be gone. **(J.C. Ryle, Practical Religion, pp.13-14)**

**Response: discussion – on all the values, the series**

- (list the values) – which of them do you most or least identify with or understand? Which one couldn’t you live without? Why or why not?

**Our Values:**

