

Sixteen years ago I was introduced to Tony Jones by way of a Youth Specialties event. I resonated with his passion for life, for the gospel, for finding better ways of sharing life with those inside and outside the walls of the church.

Throughout the years, our paths would continue to cross, and over the past decade we've become friends, even having the honor of inviting him into my home on occasion. I arrived at Christianity21 in Phoenix two days early to help set up simply because I believe in the people surrounding the JoPa events, including those attending and creating them.

Three weeks ago I opened my mouth online with no idea of the depth of the venom towards Tony in recent months. A day later people were sending me emails saying they were sorry I had been disparaged. Sighs on my behalf followed knowing I had contributed to the fires of those running rampant online.

I believe Tony is a victim of character assassination that is beyond real comprehension. I've known about pieces of Tony's story since shortly after the divorce was filed. All accounts that I heard over the years are lock step with what he published yesterday.

If we want to believe accusations over police reports and court documents as well as witnesses present at many turns along the way, we deceive ourselves. I'll take my hits if necessary, and I will hold Tony and his family in prayer as well as call him an appreciated friend. The goodness of the gospel sometimes means we stand for unpopular truth.

With much love for my friend,
Randy Buist