

January 27, 2015

I first became aware of Tony Jones through his books and his blog, both of which have helped to shape my ministry and personal faith. I met Tony a few times at various conferences and events and had some online interactions with him. A few years ago I reached out to him about JoPa partnering with me in what became the Progressive Youth Ministry conference. Together we planned and launched the first PYM gathering in 2014 and we are currently gearing up for our second conference in less than two months.

My relationship with Tony has primarily been professional. In our work together I have found him to be a generous and supportive collaborator. I will always be grateful that he took a chance on my conference idea and has shared leadership with me in a genuine partnership.

It is inevitably the case when you work with someone that you get to know them as friends, and this has been true for my relationship with Tony. I knew that he had gone through a difficult and contentious divorce before we met. We never talked much about those details because, frankly, I never thought it was any of my business.

Only recently have I become more fully aware of the allegations made against Tony on various online platforms. Given the way that some people who have worked with him in the planning of other conferences have come under attack as well, I reached out to him for more information. I have read the document he has assembled as a detailed response to these allegations and I feel confident that what is being claimed about him is not true. I applaud his transparency and vulnerability, which I have also appreciated in his blogging over the years.

As a ministry colleague and as a friend, I am saddened that Tony has had to make this public move. It is a shame that his attempts to address these issues privately have been ineffective. It is disheartening that a family conflict has been brought into this kind of public discourse by people of faith. I hope and pray that Tony, his family, and all those involved will find some kind of peaceful resolution to this matter.

While I have no desire to be pulled into this controversy myself, I also have no intention of pulling the plug on Progressive Youth Ministry and I look forward to continuing my professional and personal relationship with Tony Jones.

Sincerely,



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