



prepared to answer

1 PETER 3:15

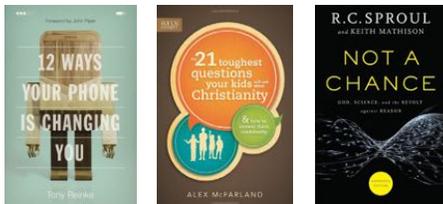
preparing the Christian to answer the questioning



Christians are feeling the pressure to be more inclusive. But do we really know what's being asked of us?

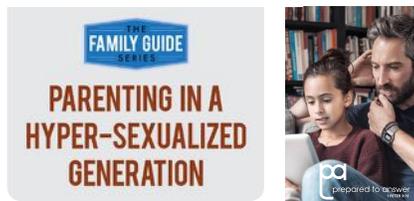
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RESOURCING YOUR HOME



Some great tools to equip yourself to think well and answer hard questions.

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RESOURCING YOUR CHURCH

A tool for parents to train their children to know God's purpose and blessing for their sexuality in Canada's 21st century, post-Christian culture.

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EXPANDING OUR REACH, GROWING OUR IMPACT

Last fall the board and I took some time to evaluate our first five years of ministry. We marvelled at how God has blessed and grown Prepared to Answer and must return all praise and glory to him!

We also did an assessment of our overall effectiveness in fulfilling the mission God has given us and sought his direction on where he would direct us over the next five years.

We committed to make 2018 a year of intentionally seeking God's leading, trusting him to position Prepared to Answer for greater kingdom reach and impact. As a part of that commitment we enlisted the assistance of an outside ministry consultant who has helped us sharpen our focus and refine our strategy for accomplishing mission.

One small refinement coming out of this process has been to change how we speak about our mission. Words are important, and so we felt it necessary to make our mission even clearer, both to those we serve and those who serve with us.

Consequently we have changed our mission statement from "Recovering the Christian Mind" to "Teaching A New Generation to Think Like Jesus". We believe this reflects even more clearly the reasons God created Prepared to Answer.

In addition to changing language, we are also taking steps to build on our first five years. We are taking the tools, teaching and training developed in that time and making them accessible to an even greater number of people through the development of an online platform. We've already seen an increase in traffic and engagement through social media, online video and our website. While

live speaking and teaching will remain an important part of our ministry, our hope is that these internet tools will help us build a consistent relationship with those we want to serve and extend our reach even around the world.

We are also thrilled to be holding our first ministry banquet on October 22nd. Invitations have gone out; tables are filling and we're looking forward to a great night of celebration. I hope you can make it!

As always I need to thank my ministry partners. Your gifts and prayers are such an encouragement and bearing fruit for Christ's kingdom. Thank you!

Blessings in Christ,

- Scott Stein



country. Now suppose there are people living just outside of those borders who want to be a part of that country, but who are unwilling to move. The inclusive sensibilities of our day would say it's simple; just move the borders to include the excluded and everyone is happy. But suppose this process gets repeated with the next group over who are now just outside the newly drawn border, and then the next one and the next one after that until there are no more border lines to be drawn. Some might say this is the ultimate aim of inclusion. One big unified, happy world where everyone, everywhere is included. What they fail to see however is that whatever it was that people originally sought to be included in no longer exists. The country in which people once sought to be included, is no longer definable or identifiable. So what is it now that people are included in?

Boundaries establish what group members share in common with each other; what makes them a community. ("Community" means "common") But by removing boundaries in order to be more inclusive you are actually removing what it means to belong to that community. As Caroline Westerhoff writes:

If belonging is without obligation and accountability, then we finally have not joined much of anything at all, and any significance that community might have held for us evaporates like mist.⁵

Kevin DeYoung points out the irony that inclusion cannot exist without exclusion since "every group that can be meaningfully joined together stands against some other group."⁶ What is troubling is how blind those most vocal about inclusion are to this fact. They do not see that their demands for inclusion necessarily exclude those who do not agree with them. And how unwelcome indeed you are made to feel if you are so identified.

What is concerning however is the speed at which Christians are calling the Church to inclusiveness. Where this means an end to prejudiced judgmentalism and a loving, accepting environment where all sinners can come as they are to find Christ, then a hearty "Amen!" to that.

With growing frequency however what is more often meant is an actual dismantling of the biblical boundaries that identify the body of Christ as separate and holy from the world. While this is being done in the name of inclusion, one wonders what it is churches doing so think they are inviting people to be a part of.

Rather than uncritically adopting the language and methods of the culture it is vital that Christians and churches gain clarity on what true inclusion means and find a better way forward.

HOW CAN CHRISTIANS BE INCLUSIVE?

In all things Jesus serves as our ultimate teacher and example. So how did Jesus understand and practise inclusion? In answering this question Derek Rishmawy identifies a crucial distinction in the way that Jesus included people into the Kingdom of God; the distinction between *renaming* and *remaking*.

INCLUSION AS RENAMING

Jesus was seen as a radical in his day because he broke time-honoured social boundaries as he proclaimed the coming of God's kingdom. The most notable examples from the gospels would include the following:

- Male vs. Female (John 4)
- Jew vs. Gentile (Matt. 8:5-13)
- Old vs. Young (Mark 10:14)
- Clean vs. Unclean (Matt. 9:18-26)
- Righteous vs. Sinners (Matt. 9:9-13)

What made Jesus' ministry so revolutionary was his willingness to *rename* such social barriers. Because the Old Testament Law was being fulfilled in Jesus himself⁵ many of the boundaries in place for God's people under Moses were no longer relevant to God's redemptive plan in history. In other cases the distortion of Old Testament Law through time and tradition had created illegitimate boundaries that ignored the Bible's clear teaching of God's love, value and concern for all people. In either case, Jesus was not afraid to *rename* such boundaries. Any boundary set up that denied people admittance into God's Kingdom simply on the basis of who they were, Jesus renamed either *obsolete* or *false*. By the new covenant of grace supplied through his blood Jesus declared that all people could find acceptance with God. The barriers of exclusion were renamed *null* and *void*.

INCLUSION AS REMAKING

But declaring all *people* acceptable to God is not the same as declaring all *things* acceptable to God. Yes, Jesus denies any category that could exclude people from God's grace, but he does not deny the categories themselves. In particular, he does not declare anyone acceptable to God by simply *renaming* their sin and calling it *righteousness*. Rather, he *remakes* people. He does this first by directly addressing

the self-excluding effect of their own sin and calling them to repentance. He then extends the offer of complete forgiveness through the sacrifice of his life on the cross. He includes them into God's kingdom by *remaking* them according to his own righteousness and adopting them as children. And he causes his life-giving Spirit to live in them, leading them and empowering them to live out this new righteous life they have been remade for. This was true for everyone in Jesus' day, whether tax collector (Mark 2:13-17; Luke 19:1-9); prostitute (Luke 7:36-50); or anyone who had sought to find life apart from God (Matthew 16:24). It is equally true for anyone today.

But it's important we remember that Jesus never worked to include people by dissolving the boundaries of his righteousness that excludes sinners from entering his Kingdom. Rather, he graciously extended his righteousness to those who were excluded from it by sin, so in turn they could enter and live within the righteous boundaries of his Kingdom. As the Apostle Paul wrote:

Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus...offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. (Romans 6:11-13)

THIS DISTINCTION OF RENAMING VS. REMAKING IS ONE THAT WE OUGHT TO THINK DEEPLY UPON.

CONCLUSION

Christians and churches are struggling over this pressure to become more inclusive. Young people in particular feel the pressure to conform. This distinction of *renaming* vs. *remaking* however is one upon which we ought to think deeply. It will help us avoid creating unnecessary barriers that would exclude people from

God's grace *and* eliminating necessary barriers that make living in relationship with a righteous and holy God possible.

Notes:

1. For a thorough and helpful analysis of the TWU case and ruling, read Bruce Clemenger's "Making Sense of the TWU Court Decision" at www.evangelicalfellowship.ca.
2. Barry W. Bussey, "TWU Drops Mandatory Community Covenant", www.cccc.org. [Accessed online Sept. 30, 2018].
3. Oxford Online Dictionary, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/include>
4. TWU Community Covenant Agreement, Section 1: Student Code of Conduct, www.twu.ca. [Accessed online Sept. 25, 2018].
5. Caroline Westerhoff, *Good Fences: The Boundaries of Hospitality*, (Morehouse Publishing, 2004), p. 29.
6. Kevin DeYoung, "All Aboard the Jargon Express", March 9, 2009, www.gospelcoalition.org. [Accessed online, Sept. 29, 2018].



PARENTING IN A HYPER-SEXUALIZED GENERATION

A tool to help parents train their children to know God's purpose and blessing for their sexuality in Canada's 21st century, post-Christian culture.

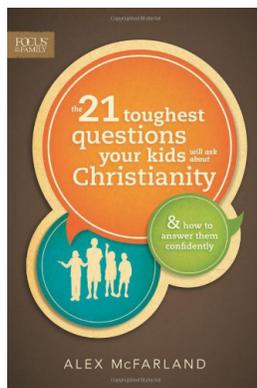


RESOURCING YOUR HOME



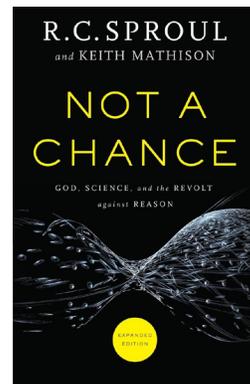
12 Ways Your Phone Is Changing You - by Tony Keinke
Without a doubt the advent of the smartphone has changed our lives, for good and bad. It has altered how we think, talk and behave. But do we even recognize the depth of its impact on our hearts and minds? In 12 Ways,

Tony Keinke blends insights from numerous thinkers, published research as well as his own study, to help us identify the powerful ways our smartphones are changing us. In addition, he offers practical insights on how to develop healthy habits which will keep these wonderful devices from hijacking our minds and robbing our souls of the true joy of life with Christ. This is a fantastic resource for parents wading through the battlefield of technology with their kids.



21 Toughest Questions Your Kids Will Ask About Christianity - by Alex McFarland
Do you dread those moments when your child asks a tough question about Christianity that you had no idea how to answer? 21 Toughest

Questions by Alex McFarland is a great resource to help you turn those moments of dread into opportunities to shape your kids' minds and transform their hearts. This book is full of great answers, as well as helpful advice on how to be ready for those tough questions.



Not A Chance -by R. C. Sproul
Have you ever met someone who has argued for or been tempted to credit the creation of the universe to chance? If so they are likely only repeating what they've heard from so many scientific voices in our generation. After all, a world created by chance has

no need for God to explain its origin or meaning. In Not A Chance, R. C. Sproul lays out a clear explanation for why attributing creation to chance is not only factually incorrect, but is an abandonment of reason itself. This is a great resource for equipping yourself for thoughtful interaction with the scientifically-minded unbeliever.



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