

The troubling theology that condones Roy Moore

The idea of a father God is extremely important in evangelical thought. They grasp that metaphor for God above all others. As a result, the evangelical understanding of the family is intimately connected to their understanding of God.

By [Carol Howard Merritt](#)

November 13, 2017



I saw a tweet of someone throwing their coffee maker out the window along with the directive to retweet the short video in order to make liberals angry.

I'm liberal. I'm on Twitter. Of course, I'm just itching for another reason to be angry. But, I didn't exactly know why a person smashing up his own \$100 appliance and having a caffeine headache the next morning was supposed to make me infuriated. Then I turned to the magic of Google and found out that Sean Hannity defended Roy Moore, which made [Kuerig pull their advertising](#). So, the whole thing is now as clear as my muddy cup of warm and delicious coffee.

To back up a bit, Roy Moore was running for the U.S. Senate for the state of Alabama, when numerous women came out and described his disturbing behavior. He was sexually aggressive with them when he was in his thirties and they were in their teens. That was bad, but what made my brow become permanently furrowed was the Evangelical response.

While many in the Republican party are trying to step back from Moore, [Evangelicals in Alabama said they would be more likely to support Moore because of his assault charges](#). [Jim Ziegler](#), the Alabama State Auditor, has likened Moore's predatory behavior to Joseph. [Kathryn Brightbill writes](#) that Moore's pursuit is the symptom of a deeper problem, citing Matthew and Maranatha Chapman, Phil Robertson (of "Duck Dynasty" fame), and Doug Wilson who have either advocated or mishandled predatory behavior.

For many religious leaders, none of this makes sense, and it would be easy for us to shrug it off as a fringe element of society that has nothing to do with us. But, of course, it does have to do with us because this is the religious milieu of a large percentage of our country, it is the driving force behind a lot of our politics, and this thinking has an understanding of God at its core.

Let's look at the theological aspect. Many people are flabbergasted that Evangelical Christians support Moore. Evangelicals want to stop marriage certificates between same-sex couples because of the sanctity of marriage *and* find it okay to molest a teenager when you're thirty?

(Of course, before I go further, I want to make the obvious disclaimer that not all Evangelicals are in the same place, and I'm sure most of them do not condone molesting children. Brightbill uses the term "fundamentalists," but I use Evangelical because I typically like to use terms that groups use for themselves. Since "fundamentalism" has also been used in relation to Islam, many Evangelicals no longer use the term.)

The idea of a Father God is extremely important in Evangelical thought. They grasp that metaphor for God above all others. As a result, the Evangelical understanding of the family is intimately connected to their understanding of God. They uphold Ephesians 5:22-23, which states:

"Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior."

For many Evangelicals, husbands are to protect and provide for their wives, and in return wives must submit to their husbands. This order in the home mirrors a man's relationship with God. A man submits to God, and God provides and protects men. Evangelicals feel that this order has been relentlessly under attack for the last sixty years.

When (white) women entered the workplace (we were joining women of color who were already there), they also began to provide for their families. As women gained more economic equality in the home, they began to negotiate household equality as well, as they thought about finances, childcare, and chores. Wives also had more economic power to leave unhappy or abusive marriages.

These days, to think that a wife is going to submit to her husband is pretty laughable for most couples. Wives and husbands are equals. We use logic, reasoning, and good sense to make decisions. We don't consider one opinion as more important than the other because one person pees while standing up.

This equality shattered "family values" for many evangelicals, and it threatened the heart of their faith. If women did not submit to men, then that disturbed the whole natural order and endangered their idea of the nature of God. Likewise, when same-sex marriages became legal, it was also a menacing threat to their order. Who would make the decisions, if the tie-breaker was not easily distinguishable? Who would be the protector? Who would be the provider? The established lines became unclear.

Yet, a thirty-year-old man understands that a 14-year-old girl is not a threat to this order. Her purity and powerlessness becomes valued more than rubies. She is pliable. She does not have the economic power to become a threat. She has very little autonomy. And if she has been homeschooled among the like-minded, she will probably submit.

Most of society and most of Christianity understands that you cannot take the marital practices from 70 CE and transfer them to 2017. After all, many marriages were arranged between a father and husband back then.

Furthermore, we know that if our view of God solely depends upon God's protection and provision, then that understanding will be shaken with our first confrontation with death, sickness, or unemployment. We have to move to an understanding of a broken God, who suffers alongside of us. We have a God who cries the tears of an infant and wears the scars of the crucified. We know that we have a God who

supports us and gives us strength, courage, and resilience. God's power nurtures us when we are sick, upholds us when we grieve, and joins us in the call for justice.

Because God's voice is with the woman, who speaks out, even when she suffered violation and abuse. Until Christians can have a better understanding of God, we will not be able to give women and girls the dignity we deserve.