

The 'Moore Effect' Will Damage Credibility of Gospel

Alabama voters will choose their next United States senator on Dec. 12.

Let me be clear: I'm not endorsing a candidate or telling readers how they should vote. Rather, I'm urging Christians not to disregard their moral compass when they enter the voting booth.

The two primary candidates running for office are Judge Roy Moore (Republican) and Doug Jones (Democrat).

Both Moore and Jones have deep roots in the Alabama clay they call home. Moore is a darling of conservative Christian evangelicals while Jones is beloved as a hero of victims' rights.

Moore [defied a federal court order](#), keeping his Ten Commandments monument in the courthouse, citing he had to obey a higher law. For his actions, he was later removed from the bench.

Jones gained prominence years ago as [the lead prosecutor in a case against two former Klansmen](#) who were found guilty of bombing the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, which killed four African-American girls in 1963.

As this race to replace Attorney General Jeff Sessions comes down to the wire, the last month has been marred with allegations that Moore engaged in sexual misconduct with female minors, one as young as 14 years old, several decades ago.

These claims have not been proven and no charges have been filed, but some current U.S. senators from Moore's own party have encouraged him to withdraw his candidacy.

Others, including President Donald J. Trump and dozens of Alabama pastors, continue to support Moore.

They have cited a combination of disbelief of the allegations and political motives on the timing of the accusations as the basis for their stance.

“This attack on Judge Moore is an attempt by the Democrats to sway voters in Alabama,” Pastor David Floyd of Marvyn Parkway Baptist Church, Opelika, [told AL.com](#). “I don’t believe those women. In this country, you are innocent until proven guilty.”

“If he did what he’s being accused of, then he should be arrested and tried in court,” Pastor Paul Hubbard of Lakeview Baptist Church [told Montgomery TV station WSFA-12](#). “But accusations are just accusations.”

Some conservative Christian evangelicals [have publicly said](#) they do not agree with Moore on every issue, but they would rather have him in office than a Democrat.

President Trump agreed when he [tweeted](#) Monday, Dec. 4, “Democrats refusal to give even one vote for massive Tax Cuts is why we need Republican Roy Moore to win in Alabama. We need his vote on stopping crime, illegal immigration, Border Wall, Military, Pro-Life, V.A., Judges 2nd Amendment and more. No to Jones, a Pelosi/Schumer Puppet!”

The Republican National Convention [resumed financial support of Moore’s campaign](#) following the president’s endorsement.

Some national evangelical leaders, including [Russell Moore](#) and [Ed Stetzer](#), have urged Christians not to disregard moral indiscretions when entering the voting booth.

Still others, such as [Jerry Falwell Jr.](#) and [Franklin Graham](#), are enthusiastically endorsing Moore’s candidacy.

While we should remember that in the U.S. a person is innocent until proven guilty, this principle is often selectively applied - seemingly dependent on the political affiliation of the person being accused.

In the case of Moore, it appears that some leaders have decided all accusations are untrue no matter how much evidence mounts or that political calculations trump moral considerations.

The Apostle Paul knew far too well the dangers of men seeking power over the gospel, "I know that after I have gone, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Some even from your own group will come distorting the truth in order to entice the disciples to follow them" (Acts 20:29-30).

They come "distorting the truth" so that they might have followers, which translates to power and wealth. Similar warnings are found in Ezekiel 22:27 and Matthew 7:15.

The "Moore Effect" - adding to the decline of Western Christianity by being more concerned about political power, hypocritical about beliefs, and driven by rigid laws rather than love of God and neighbor - upon Christianity will have long-lasting consequences.

Leaders who were quick to condemn women who brought allegations of sexual misconduct will face a reckoning.

As recently published research indicates, American Christianity is quickly declining. Hypocritical actions by evangelicals in the pursuit of political victories and power are contributing to this decline.

The Moore Effect will damage the credibility of the gospel. Why should anyone listen when the church seems to toss away its moral compass when election results are on the line?

The Moore Effect on the gospel will have more effect than anyone can ever imagine. May the church repent, and may God have mercy on our souls.

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