

# When Religion and Television Support Child Molestation and Rape

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**Submission:** September 03, 2016; **Published:** September 16, 2016

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## Opinion

This paper proffers my opinion about the frustration involved when religion and television appear to support and condone child molestation and rape. I am a forensic psychologist, expert witness, author and college professor. I am asking you think about the following.

TLC (The Learning Channel) had a show on the Duggar family, a sect of the Baptist church. The parents had 19 children and claimed that it was God's will that they have as many children as possible and that God decides how many children they have. This show depicts almost unrealistic family values.

FACT: Conceiving a child has little to do with God. Sperm and Ovum meet and there is a 50/50 chance that a pregnancy will result. What about having as many children as you can reasonably financially support and reasonably and effectively parent? How did they pay for their children, oh wait, their show "19 kids and counting" and TLC. They as Baptists fail to accept responsibility for how many children they have, not God. Perhaps birth control or abstinence? Wow, hypocrites. Is it written in their Bible to have as many children as possible, I missed that book in the Christian Bible (not sure what version they use that supports having as many children as possible) [1,2].

And then the story plot thickens. Wait for it. Their son Josh, working for the Family Research Council (an extreme right-wing group that is anti LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual) admits to molesting at least five girls, some of who are his sisters [3]. The sexual abuse was apparently reported to the police and "church elders", but no mandated child sexual abuse report was ever apparently filed by church elders or a state trooper who also was informed about the sexual abuse. Josh's father, Jim Bob, apparently utilized prayer and some intervention to address the situation. Clearly not the family values as depicted in the program. In fact, Josh was never held criminally accountable for his actions and the incest and child sexual abuse was covered-up.

Interesting is that there does not appear to be any criminal investigation that resulted from the sexual abuse [3]. It appears

that it was handled within the family and with some unidentified intervention program. Yet as a psychologist, I cannot understand the lack of a Child Protection or Police investigation. Treatment staff, mental health professionals, the State Trooper and clergy are all mandated reporters of child abuse and child sexual abuse. Somehow, money plays a role here, the prerogative to not follow the same rules and laws that are put into place to protect children appear to have been ignored. Both parents of Josh indicated that the situation has brought them closer to God. Really, closer to God? How?

Failing to protect your own daughters from being sexually abused by Josh and covering up your son's (Josh) child sexual molesting behavior demonstrates no concern for your children's wellbeing. In addition of course is that there was at least one additional victim outside the family for whom justice was never given. Wow, and they portray themselves as Christians. How are you protecting your children from having been abused by covering it up and circumventing the legal system? The Bible is clear about protecting your children (e.g., OpenBible.com, 2015). How is avoiding the appropriate mental health and legal routes to address your children's/victim's needs caring for their wellbeing? How are you protecting your son, the child molester, Josh, by not getting him the appropriate help he needed from a qualified and ethical mental health provider? It is obvious you did not seek a qualified mental health provider because the licensed mental health provider would have be required, under ethical rules and legal statutes to report the sexual abuse to proper authorities. You interpreted the Bible as it is convenient for you, at the expense of covering up your son, Josh, sexually abusing your daughters and at least one other female.

## Using Religion to Excuse Sexual Abuse

The family prays Josh's sins away but fails to work with authorities and fail to put Josh into a structured sex offender treatment program to pray away his sins. Instead, blaming the victims and girls in general for enticing and luring boys and men into sexual arousal which in turn causes the boys and men

to act in uncontrollable sexual ways. Girls are then expected to dress differently and boys to look at their shoes versus look at an attractive female. How does that not blame females for abuse or rape?

As a man I am offended to be viewed as being unable to control my sexual impulses. I am offended as any man should be that the Duggars and others believe and preach that somehow we men are at the mercy of attractive or sexually dressed females and that we somehow cannot control our sexual behavior. What religion teaches this? Oh yes, a sector of the Baptist Church or at least the Duggar's church. And of course Josh remains an untreated sexual offender and untreated child molester.

Wait for it. Recently Josh was found having a sexual affair with a woman he met on a discrete dating and sex site for married men. Well, Josh is married and I guess that is the website for him. Again his true colors and morality are exposed. But what do his parents do- well, wait for it. They rush him into a religious treatment program to pray away his sins once more. For the record, there is no "rehab" for cheaters and the only "rehab" for sex offenders is a structured sex offender treatment program. Praying it away does not work there is no evidence. God holds each of us accountable to work with authorities and experts in a field to help treat us, but we have to want to change and it is our responsibility to seek out the experts in a specific field in this case sex offender treatment, not a church pray it away program.

At what point do we hold the Duggars, Josh, and TLC accountable for minimizing sexually violent/predatory behavior? At what point does religion stop being used to cover up a person's decision to sexually molest or sexually offend? At what point do we hold the individual accountable and stop blaming God? Josh is mentally screwed up. I will use that layman's term. He will likely continue to have affairs, to use women sexually, and molest children. How can I say that? The fact is his sexual behavior has been a problems for years, since at least age 14, up to the present. And the family misuses religion to avoid calling Josh a sex offender. In fact, his sisters (some of his victims) are brain washed to believe that Josh was just "experimenting" and that he needs forgiveness. Further, Josh justifies having sexual affairs when married (yet claiming the utmost religious values) which is evident thorough his behavior of engaging in marital infidelity.

TLC channel has announced a new show for the Duggars. Does not matter if the whole family is involved, what a shocking disgrace. How about not glorifying a religious family who justifies child molestation and sexual offending. A family who

time and time again blames the females for enticing Josh and who since that time required the girls to dress in different ways, have locks on their bedroom doors, and Josh has virtually no consequence. How do we know how many victims Josh has? The admits to 5 but how do we know that is all? In addition, how do we know that the sexual abuse did not continue after discovery and if it did, would the victims have felt safe enough to report it or perhaps would the victims have been brain washed to accept any sexual abuse as being their fault and therefore not report it again?

It is interesting that the more right-wing and conservative a family appears, the more atrocious acting out eventually comes to light. We refer to this as being hypocrites. The attacks by religious and family value groups against homosexuality is anything but Christian. God told us in the Christian Bible to love and respect others, to protect children as Christ protected children, and not to judge others but rather to love them. Basically let God do the judging. And yet the hypocrites preach as though they themselves are somehow more righteous than anyone else despite their violating of the teachings of Christ and God.

### What can we do?

- a. Hold TLC accountable for not only keeping the "19 Kids and Counting" program on as long as they did and boycott any new program involving the Duggars. Let them earn their income the old fashioned way. Their family values involve blaming females for causing rape and to fail to hold men in their religion accountable for sexual molestation and rape.
- b. Stop glorifying religions and families that justify or in any way blame the victim for being sexually or physically abused. The majority of Christians do not abuse or rape or molest children that would be anti Christian.
- c. Hold men accountable for their actions. The only person that can cause a person to react is the person themselves. No one can make a man so angry to "make him" abuse or so sexually aroused that he cannot stop himself from sexually abusing or raping.

### References

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