

Marvin Moore on Our Message to the World

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In a recent publication of ours (*Marvin Moore Explains the Future [WM-1019-1020]*), we reviewed a book by Marvin Moore, entitled *The Coming Great Calamity*, 192 pp., Pacific Press, in which he told how to prepare for the final crisis.

In that book, we learned that Moore's primary point was that the message which Adventists should give to the world at the present time is the news that large "meteorites" are soon to fall from the skies, causing terrible disasters,—and that the world should try to prepare for them.

That book said not a word about urging people to obey the commandments of God or keep the Bible Sabbath. Meteorites was the message. Not only did he not mention crucial events in the book, *Great Controversy*, but he declared that we should not even tell our own children what is in that book until they are teenagers!

THE COMING GLOBAL CRISIS

The present writer has now discovered two more of Marvin Moore's books. The first is *How to Prepare for the Coming Global Crisis* (128 pp., Pacific Press, 2000).

Great Calamity tells Adventists what they are to tell the world about coming events. *Coming Global Crisis* is our designated denominational Book of the Year for 2001. The plan is for our people to purchase it in quantity and hand it to non-Adventists as a missionary book they can read for themselves.

Coming Global Crisis has nothing to say about the Bible Sabbath, the law of God, the National Sunday Law, or hardly any future event described in Daniel, Revelation, or *Great Controversy*.

Instead, it discusses how the reader needs to solve his personal identity crisis, his lack of self-esteem, compulsive behavior, addiction to commodity trading, alcoholism, and the dangers of trying to be righteous by works.

We fully believe in trusting in Jesus, yet there is far more to the message we are to give to the world in these last days. God has raised up our people to call men and women back to obedience to God's holy law, by the enabling faith in Jesus Christ. We are not only to tell them to believe in Christ; we are also to explain that, in addition to forgiving our sinful past, He can and will empower us to resist temptation and over-

come sin in the present and future.

In reality, it is not movie reviews and quotations from non-Adventist writers that we need to share with the world; we need to give them the solid truths for this time. They need to know about the Seventh-day Sabbath, the truth about hellfire, and the dangers of spiritualism. The best way to give them that information is to share copies of *Great Controversy* and give them Bible studies on our historic beliefs.

I invite you to purchase a copy of this "book of the year," *The Coming Global Crisis*, and see for yourself how empty it is. Far better would it be if we would purchase boxfuls of *Steps to Christ* and hand out that excellent book to the public!

THE END TIME

The other book which came to my attention is *How to Think about the End Time* (222 pp., Pacific Press, 2001). *End Time* is a larger book and something of a sequel to *Coming Great Calamity*. Also written for our own people, it contains a number of unusual concepts. Here are several of them:

- As he earlier did in *Coming Great Calamities*, Moore once again emphasizes that terrible physical calamities will take place in the future (p. 16).

- Moore maintains that no Jesuit agents have ever been salaried workers in the Adventist denomination (pp. 36-37). He seems to be certain of this, although church historians have discussed how, since the 16th century, Jesuits have regularly penetrated governments, churches and schools throughout the world. One evidence, that an organization has been penetrated, is the emergence of ecumenical relations with Rome. Moore mentions the fact that he, himself, studied for one year, in the early 1970s, in a Catholic school (University of Dallas, Texas). He said that it was there that he learned how to be a writer (p. 37). His books appear to reflect what he was there taught.

- Moore ridicules the idea that our people would learn anything from a study of what took place in 1888, at Minneapolis, or from the messages written about it (p. 62). Yet we know that Ellen White was deeply concerned that our people obtain a correct understanding of the issues.

- He says that the various Adventist reasons for the delay of Christ, in returning for His people, are without foundation. Included here would be the idea

that we need to put away sin and perfect our characters (pp. 62-63 [cf. *Christ's Object Lessons*, 69]), that Christ is waiting for more souls to be warned or saved (p. 63), or that He is waiting till the wickedness in the world increases (pp. 64-65). According to Moore, we should not try to ascertain whether we have any responsibility about the matter; but instead we should just carry on our daily business and living as usual, and wait until the end comes (p. 68).

“There is no indication in the parable [of the ten virgins] that the girls’ preparation or lack of preparation had anything to do with the time of the bridegroom’s arrival. In both parables—the two servants and the ten virgins—the master and the bridegroom arrived when they were ready, not when the servants or the virgins were ready. In fact, in both parables exactly half of the people were not ready, but the master and the bridegroom came anyway!”—*Page 64*.

But the Spirit of Prophecy declares that God’s people are involved in the delay. You will find nine powerful statements in *Evangelism*, pp. 694-696. Here are two examples:

“Had the purpose of God been carried out by His people in giving to the world the message of mercy, Christ would, ere this, have come to the earth, and the saints would have received their welcome into the city of God.”—6 *Testimonies*, 450; *Evangelism*, 694 (1900).

“I know that if the people of God had preserved a living connection with Him, if they had obeyed His Word, they would today be in the heavenly Canaan.”—*General Conference Bulletin*, March 30, 1903; *Evangelism*, 694.

Also consider this statement:

“Everything is preparing for the great day of God. Time will last a little longer until the inhabitants of the earth have filled up the cup of their iniquity, and then the wrath of God, which has so long slumbered, will awake, and this land of light will drink the cup of His unmingled wrath.”—1 *Testimonies*, 363.

• Moore emphasizes the point that we should not tell others that we believe Jesus is coming soon (pp. 92-93).

“I can’t remember when I first heard an Adventist say, ‘Surely the coming of Jesus will be within the next five years,’ but it’s been a long time. And I’ve heard it every now and then since. Occasionally it comes out more subtly, such as when someone mentions an event he or she anticipates happening in five or ten years—graduation from college, retirement, long-range job goals, etc.—and the person he or she is talking to will remark, ‘I hope we’re in heaven by then.’

“I wish we could all bring ourselves to stop saying things like that, because it’s actually a mild form of time setting, and like all time-setting schemes, it

has the potential to create major spiritual problems.”—*Page 92*.

Do you believe that it is damaging to your soul to want Jesus to come back soon or to hope that it will be soon? Marvin Moore thinks so.

• In a June 1999 article he wrote in the *Signs of the Times*, entitled “Who Is the Antichrist?” Moore named, not the pope, but Satan as the antichrist. In response to that article, he says he received many letters of complaint that he was changing Adventist teachings. This is how he describes the article:

“The article reviewed the New Testament evidence for the antichrist and concluded that ‘one individual—possibly Satan himself—will be the ultimate antichrist just before Jesus comes.’ My conservative Adventist readers were disappointed that I did not identify the pope as the ultimate antichrist.”—*Page 98*.

Moore’s reply is that the papacy *may* have been the antichrist in the Dark Ages—and will be one of several antichrists at the end of time. But, he goes on to suggest that this is not for public presentation.

“I agree that at the very least the papacy was the antichrist during the Middle Ages and will be an important antichrist during the final conflict. The question is: How should we present that view to the public?”—*Page 99*.

• Moore says it would be uncourteous for us, today, to speak of the pope as the antichrist.

“I’m talking about one of the graces of the Christian spirit, which takes into consideration other people’s feelings before we speak or act. How will Catholics feel about our statement that the pope is the antichrist? How will the general public perceive it?”—*Page 100*.

• Moore says that, today, we should not say anything negative about the Catholic Church,—because Protestant leaders are drawing too close to Rome for our words to be properly understood. For that reason, he says, we also should not distribute the book, *Great Controversy*.

“We cannot use the same language to talk about Catholics today that our pioneers used a hundred years ago. Allow me to explain.

“Ellen White’s *magnum opus* [leading book] on the end time—the *Great Controversy*—was written in the late 1800s when anti-Catholic feelings were running strong in American Protestantism. This sentiment was still strong during most of the first half of the twentieth century. As *Time* magazine put it [March 6, 2000], back in the 1920s ‘anti-Catholicism was a staple of conservative American Protestantism. Americans, alarmed at the influx of Irish and Italian immigrants, took solace in Reformation descriptions of the pope as the whore of Babylon.’

“*Time* went on to point out, however, that ‘eventually most American Protestants left anti-Catholicism behind, and from the 1950s on, Billy Graham

led many Evangelicals toward a greater tolerance.’

“Greater tolerance indeed! We live in a time when this so-called tolerance is running so strong that some Lutherans are beginning to anticipate the day when they will return to the ‘mother church!’ Obviously, today’s relationship between Protestants and Catholics in America is the polar opposite of what it was a hundred years ago. I should hasten to point out that I do not consider this to be all bad. Much of the attitude a hundred years ago was blind prejudice.”—Page 101.

- Moore says we should tone down Ellen White’s concepts on last-day events.

“Where she said that the Catholic Church ‘possesses the same pride and arrogant assumption that lorded it over kings and priests’ [*Great Controversy*, 571], I might say Catholics still adhere to the political theory that the church is superior to the state.”—Page 102.

“I would use different words to state those ideas because the words she used a hundred years ago, which were not perceived as offensive back then, would definitely be perceived so today.”—Page 103.

- Moore says that, today, we should only rarely give *Great Controversy* to anyone.

“The foregoing discussion raises a significant question: Should we continue circulating the *Great Controversy*? And the answer is Yes, of course. But I believe we must pay attention to how we do it. I am personally opposed to taking armloads of the books down the street and dropping one on every door step or handing a copy to every person we meet.”—Page 104.

In reality, Ellen White was divinely guided to write the book, *Great Controversy*, in the way she did. The reader is first taken through earlier history, and a foundation is laid for the truths for these last days and final events. (In our own final-chapters GC, we have been careful to present three chapters, containing earlier history, before presenting the reader with the truths of chapters 25 and onward.)

- Moore says that Ellen White does not mean what she says, when she says the book, *Great Controversy*, should be “widely distributed.”

“Ellen White did suggest that the *Great Controversy* be ‘widely circulated’ [*Review*, February 16, 1905; *Colporteur Ministry*, 123], but that’s quite different than saying it should be ‘scattered like the leaves of autumn.’ In harmony with the words ‘widely circulated,’ it’s perfectly appropriate to give the *Great Controversy* to people who show an interest in our church, particularly after they’ve had a bit of instruction about our beliefs, including our understanding of prophecy.”—Page 104.

- The next chapter begins by mentioning that “the February 1997 issue of *Signs of the Times* carried an article on John Paul II by Samuele Bacchiocchi, and we put a photograph of the pope on the cover” (p. 107).

Further down on the same page, Moore says “the article discussed in a very respectful way the positive contributions” the pope had made. Moore says that those Adventists who think that article should give a more clear-cut message have “animosity, hatred, bigotry, or prejudice” (108) in their hearts.

- Moore says the time has not yet come when Seventh-day Adventists are supposed to tell the world the end-time facts (such as are given in *Great Controversy*).

“We also should identify as much as possible with those we are trying to reach. But we can’t do that and at the same time fly in the face of their cultural perceptions of propriety. We can’t do that and at the same time condemn them. The day will come when circumstances will demand that we proclaim our message in spite of cultural perceptions, but that time is still future.”—Page 112.

- Moore spends considerable time trying to show that the Roman Catholic Church has changed, so we should be far more tolerant of it today. He begins the section by referring to an article by Reinder Bruinsma (printed in *Spectrum*, Summer 1999), entitled, “*Adventists and Catholics: Prophetic Preview or Prejudice*.” (Bruinsma is listed in the latest *Adventist Yearbook* as one of our ordained ministers who lives in Britain.) In that article, Bruinsma said that Rome has changed very favorably while Adventists are mired in 19th century condemnation of it.

Very much liking what Bruinsma wrote, Moore comments:

“Since Adventists see the papacy as primarily responsible for the change of the Sabbath to Sunday, we [in the late 1880s] expressed great apprehension toward this combination of insurgent Catholicism and potential Sunday laws. Bruinsma concludes that the Adventist interpretation of Catholicism and end-time prophecy is rooted in this nineteenth-century world view . . . Since Adventists view Ellen White as a divinely inspired author, we have tended to set her nineteenth-century interpretation in cement. As Bruinsma states it, ‘Once she codified those views, it became virtually impossible to reevaluate them critically without questioning her prophetic authority.’ Bruinsma notes, however, that great changes have taken place in Roman Catholicism during the hundred-plus years since Ellen White wrote the *Great Controversy*, particularly as a result of Vatican II in the early 1960s.”—Page 118.

Moore says we need to carefully consider what Bruinsma, writing in the highly liberal journal, *Spectrum*, has to tell us.

“Bruinsma has raised significant issues that deserve a fair hearing. Unfortunately, some Adventists feel that it is a compromise of principle even to ask questions such as those raised by Bruinsma.”—Page 119.

“Bruinsma comments: ‘Even in the momentous days of Vatican II (1962-1965), when Catholicism

underwent enormous change, the Adventist view remained constant, even though B.B. Beach, the chief Adventist correspondent at all four sessions, had relatively positive appraisals of the proceedings.’—*Pages 118-119.*

The facts are these:

First, Ellen White said that Rome has not changed and never will change.

Second, events have shown her position to be true. Vatican II made no basic changes in fundamental Catholic teaching. Repeatedly, Protestants have tried to unite with Rome on various points, and have found that Rome has not changed! All its underlying, hideous doctrines are the same. Its teachings about the pope, the priesthood, Mary and the saints, the mass, and the primacy of the pope and tradition are immovable. Read the list of Romish corruptions, given in chapter 3 of *Great Controversy*. Not one item has been repudiated. By the statement of their own leaders and writers, when the church once again has power, it will once again persecute. Only the church has religious liberty, and all must bow to its mandates or be cast into hellfire.

The present writer has studied extensively into these matters, and it is well-known among knowledgeable Catholics (even though not recognized by Bruinsma and Moore) that the Vatican has steadily drawn back from the most striking of the minor concessions it made at Vatican II. Rome has no intention of changing. Besides, who cares whether priests now say the mass in non-Latin languages; the church still champions Sunday, demands that all bow to the authority of the church and the pope, worships idols, prays to Mary, receives the mass, and accepts the fiendish lie of eternal hellfire,—on pain of eternal damnation if they refuse.

- Marvin Moore maintains that obedience to the law of God has nothing to do with salvation (pp. 166-167).

The truth is that, at the moment of conversion, we are forgiven of our sins. We then immediately begin the Christian life of obedience through the enabling grace of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.

But Moore incorrectly teaches that, at the moment we first accept Christ, *we are saved!* Everything we do after that has nothing to do with salvation, which we have already received. He equates justification as salvation. (Justification is actually forgiveness of past sins.)

“Nothing we do—no amount of obeying the commandments or keeping church standards—can qualify us for this acceptance by God.”—*Page 166.*

“True obedience can be developed only after we have been saved. It can never be counted as merit toward our salvation.”—*Page 167.*

The truth is this: (1) Only in Christ’s strength can we resist sin and obey His law. (2) That which is done by His grace is not merit on our part; it is just empowered Christian living and all the praise be to God for a new, clean, victorious life. (3) If we do not obey, we will not be saved!

- Marvin Moore takes eleven pages in an attempt to show that it is not possible to fully resist sin and obey God’s law in this life (pp. 170-180). He admits that the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy teach perfection of character (pp. 172-173).

“From the evidence we have examined thus far, we can safely say that both Scripture and Ellen White affirm that, at the very least, God’s people who live through the end time must reach a very high level of character development. The Bible describes them as ‘blameless,’ and Ellen White uses expressions such as ‘their robes must be spotless;’ ‘their characters must be purified from sin;’ ‘they must be conquerors in the battle with evil’ [GC 425]. She also says there was nothing in Jesus that Satan could use to his advantage and that ‘this is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble’ [GC 623]. We may disagree over exactly what perfection means, but the inspired evidence leaves us in no doubt that those who live during the end time must attain to it, whatever it is.”—*Page 173.*

“Perfection of character” is not complicated; it just means “obeying God’s law by faith in Christ.” Should not Seventh-day Adventists believe and teach that people can obey God’s law through the grace of Christ? Why bother to teach others to keep the Bible Sabbath, if we ourselves do not believe it can be done?

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”—*Revelation 12:17.*

“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”—*Revelation 14:12.*

Why should such a faith offend any Seventh-day Adventist? Yet Moore fears that the concept may frighten some people and lead to fanaticism (p. 175). But living with Jesus is a happy experience; we do not need to fear it, nor worry that it will damage people’s minds. Why should any fear living a clean, pure life of happiness in Christ? The only reason to doubt such a wonderful offer from God would be a desire to cling to cherished sin (*Steps to Christ, 111:1*). May we come thankfully to our God, and give Him all we have and are. We will lose nothing, but that which is hurtful to us. But, oh, how much we will gain! —*vf*