

## **WHEN GODLY PEOPLE TEACH UNGODLY THEOLOGY: THE SUBTLE ERROR OF BETH MOORE**

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She is a best-selling author whose Bible study books and workbooks have sold more than 10 million copies, and who leads the pack of authors at LifeWay, the publishing arm of the Southern Baptist Convention. She is said to be an “evangelical super star” and “one of the most respected and sought-after Bible teachers[1]” whose conferences draw women — and some men — by the thousands. She’s Beth Moore, the blond, petite 50-year-old with a Texas accent, who has become a Christian darling among believers of all denominations.

A few years ago, readers of Today’s Christian Woman magazine ranked Moore near the top of its list of “women [who] have had the greatest impact on [their] life in the last five years.”[2] The magazine’s roster had Moore (at 27%) third behind charismatic preacher Joyce Meyer (46%) and popular author Stormie Omartian (31%). At the same time, Christian Reader magazine celebrated her with the lavish title of “America’s Bible teacher,” a designation from which even Moore shies away. “If I’m America’s Bible teacher, America’s in trouble!” she told Charisma magazine.[3]

Her rise to fame was slow and steady. Moore says she trusted Christ as Savior prior to her sixth birthday and says she surrendered to a call to the ministry during her late teen years while working as a counselor for sixth-grade girls at a church camp. Moore taught children, then moved on to leading a church aerobics class. In 1984, she began teaching a Sunday school class for young married adults at First Baptist Church of Houston. Two decades later, she taught a coed Sunday school class with about 700 members, along with a Bible study on Tuesday evenings that

drew more than 3,000 women and some men who, while not prohibited from attending, were not encouraged to attend.[4] Moore's practice of coed teaching spills over into her other venues, such as the Passion '07 conference held this past January in Atlanta.

Her longtime and former pastor, John Bisagno, acknowledges Moore as a stellar teacher, and "gave Moore opportunities to grow as a teacher by allowing her to speak regularly during the church's Sunday-evening services." [5] However, Bisagno contends that Moore's teaching venues do not run counter to Southern Baptist principles.

No doubt much of Moore's appeal and success across denominational lines stem from the fact that "she doesn't get caught up in divisive doctrinal issues. In fact, she purposely steers clear of topics that could widen existing rifts between different streams in the body of Christ." [6]

#### GOOD, BUT NOT PLENTY

Moore has some admirable qualities, including her desire to promote biblical literacy and a hunger to seek "after the absolute priority of worship and being in God's Word." [7] She also maintains that, "I am convinced that discernment will be one of the most important criteria in the devoted believer's life to provide protection from seduction." [8] Likewise, one can glean from her writings sound biblical instruction. In her highly popular volume, *When Godly People Do Ungodly Things*, she writes that Christians must take full responsibility for their sin if they are ever to find freedom and restoration. [9]

However, the problem with her sound biblical expressions is that they are drowned in a sea of what she calls seduction, deception, and victimization. In the very statement where she says we must take full responsibility for our sin, she identifies the guilty as "victims" who "temporarily turned ungodly." [10] Moore's counsel is a mixed bag. It is unfortunate that most of her readers read her uncritically.

Perhaps Moore could best be described in terms of Eliphaz the Temanite, the eldest and wisest of Job's three friends. Not every single thing Eliphaz told Job was wrong, but his cumulative philosophy was

skewed. His counsel stemmed more from observation and experience, as attested by the recurrence of “I have seen.”[11] Moore echoes the source of Eliphaz’s wisdom:

“My dilemma is that I’ve seen too much, experienced too much, and studied too much to totally discount what completely unrelated and perfectly lucid people are saying.”[12]

Eliphaz also claimed a special spiritual illumination for his counsel ([Job 4:12-13](#)), just like Moore, who says God gave her the message in *When Godly People Do Ungodly Things*. It’s an assertion that’s found throughout the volume. For example, she writes in the Preface:

“When the message for this book was complete (in His estimation — not mine!), God compelled me to ink it on paper with a force of the Holy Spirit unparalleled in my experience. He whisked me to the mountains of Wyoming where I entered solitary confinement with Him, and in only a few short weeks, I wrote the last line.”[13]

On the very next page she asserts, “What I’m saying is that I wrote this message to the best of my ability under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and I do not believe it conceptually departs from the precepts of God’s Word.”[14] Of course, it could not, if it indeed was written as she says, “under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.” Elsewhere she maintains that in the course of compiling data for the book “God explicitly told me that I had plenty and to get busy writing this message.”[15] She further asserts that not only was the book’s content from God, but the very title:

“Oddly, the concept for this book came complete, God delivering the title to me in full. My Bible was open to these verses for the first time in a long while, and the instruction from the Lord came so unmistakably that I dated it in the margin: April 19, 2000. My pen still didn’t touch the paper until almost exactly a year later when I knew His Spirit was saying to me, ‘Now.’ I headed to the mountains, and within a few weeks it was done.”[16]

Moreover, it seems that such supposed special spiritual revelation was not just limited to her *When Godly People Do Ungodly Things* book. While penning her *Praying God’s Word* volume, she says “God directed

me” and “He revealed to me.”[17]

And in the midst of the divine obligation to get the *When Godly People Do Ungodly Things* message out, it looks like God is somewhat of a harsh taskmaster:

“One of the peculiarities about this assignment is that God also required me to fast. He would not release me to eat until the very end of each day after all writing for that day was accomplished. Sometimes He would not release me until the end of the next day. ... To tell you how adamant He was, the one time I thought I’d be fine to eat break-fast; my thoughts became completely warbled and confused until midafternoon.”[18]

One should ask how Moore received her divine mandate to fast. This, like other mystical statements throughout the book, stems from her personal subjectivism. On this one, Moore is acting upon the direction and desire of her own heart and imagination. The “God spoke to me” is a strategy used for selfish purposes. For all her talk of “seduction” throughout her book, she is the one being seduced by her own subjectivism.

Yet in fairness to God, it doesn’t appear that He’s all business and no play. In the midst of writing the book during an April snow, God spoke to Moore and said: “Come and play.” Moore next tells her readers:

“So I did. I built a snowman. I used grapes for his eyes, and a half-moon-shaped sesame snack made the perfect smile. I didn’t give him a nose. I have enough for both of us. ... I laughed with God. He laughed with me.”[19]

Moore’s writing is recurrent with whisperings and statements from God, some complete with quotation marks.[20] Additionally, Moore encourages her readers along the same mystical lines. “Hear His tender voice speak to you now,”[21] and “Begin practicing an open dialogue with Him concerning your past, present, and future,”[22] she instructs. She also informs them:

“Sometimes we get a gut feeling that we ought to avoid involvement in a situation, and some-times that gut feeling is the work of the Holy

Spirit.”[23]

Here Moore is dangerously arming her readers with a feelings-based belief system, under the guise of the Holy Spirit. The problem with such a guidance system is that feelings can and do err. [Psalm 119:105](#) is our antidote to avoid error. It is the Word alone which “is the work of the Holy Spirit” to guide the believer.

#### ACCOUNTABILITY? COUNT BETH OUT

Moore, like so many of the other modern mystics, visionaries, and prophets, grooms around herself a nice “hedge.” Amongst all her grandiose claims of divine exposition, is her escape strategy:

“Certainly I’m not audaciously implying that this book is written under the same kind of divine inspiration as the Holy Scriptures! The Word of God is our only volume of pure truth. We mortals no doubt taint everything we touch however accidentally.”[24]

Yes, it is true that mortals do taint everything we touch. But that’s exactly what divine inspiration overrules. Inspiration is God overseeing the process of recording His special revelation without error. Apologist Ron Rhodes tells us inspiration “mean[s] that God superintended the human authors so that, using their own individual personalities (and even their writing styles), they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man. Because of inspiration we can rest assured that what the human authors wrote was precisely what God wanted written.”[25]

Apparently, according to Moore, this is no longer the case. Yet the truth is that either one is inspired of God or one is not. One simply cannot, as Moore does, repeatedly say, “God told me,” and then dodge accountability for such a prescript. Apart from the written Word, making a claim such as “God told me” or “God spoke to me” is bearing false witness against God.

#### DO UNTO OTHERS, NOT UNTO ME

Moore also tries to avoid responsibility in other ways as well. Before the reader ever turns to the first page of chapter one, they are warned:

“I cannot write to please man as much as I’d like to at times. So, when you’ve turned the last page, if you’re not pleased, kindly consider telling God and not me. My self-esteem is shakier than His.”[26]

Moore’s appeal is regrettable on several fronts. First, when a book or periodical is published and circulated to the public, it becomes open to, when necessary, public criticism, re-buke, and correction. This is especially crucial for Christians, because false teaching inside the Church is much more lethal than false teaching outside the Church. Jay Adams addresses the need for public criticism:

“Any Christian who sets himself up as a teacher in the church of Christ and publicly teaches anything thereby opens himself up for criticism by others (cf. [James 3:1](#)). If they think what he is teaching is harmful to the church, they have an obligation to point it out just as widely as it was taught. Such public warning or debate on the topic should not be considered a personal attack at all. ... What a critic of a public teaching does in pointing out his disagreement with that teaching has nothing to do with personal affronts or lack of reconciliation; he is simply disagreeing at the same public level as that on which the teaching was given in the first place.”[27]

It is also noteworthy that in nearly every case, criticism of a work never receives the prominence, distribution, or circulation of the work itself. Moore’s books, workbooks, and video lessons have sold in the millions, while what little criticism she receives pales in comparison.

Secondly, Moore plays the well-worn “self-esteem” card. One who acts as spiritual as Moore should know better. Moore’s self-esteem shouldn’t be shaky; it should be absent. Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit” ([Matthew 5:3](#)). Moore employs ideas that pop theologians and psychologists of our day use, teaching that someone who is disappointingly judged or mistreated will suffer damage to his or her self-esteem.[28] And, perhaps those who injure her self-esteem may find themselves in union with the devil, as Moore writes that “Satan would still love to torture me with a low self-esteem.”[29]

Finally, in sidestepping accountability and pre-empting criticism, Moore fails to meet some of the sound biblical guidelines she herself instructs others to follow. Consider these trustworthy statements by Moore:

“Beloved, do you see that those who have discernment don’t get defensive and start rationalizing when they’re rebuked! Instead, they gain knowledge. Hallelujah!”[30]

“Not only is the seduce-proofed individual a hearer and doer of the Word, he is also a man (or woman, of course) who does not despise the instructions, exhortations, or warnings of those whom God sends his way.”[31]

And:

“We need to be desperate for good advisers, and we also need to be desperate for the humility to receive instruction.”[32]

Additionally, it appears that criticism is acceptable in Moore’s eyes as long as she’s on the giving end. She writes:

“Let’s throw out another hypothetical situation. Let’s say I have no hard evidence, but I discern something wrong in a fellow believer or in a relationship between believers. After much prayer, God appoints me discreetly and lovingly to approach the person with concern.”[33]

## UNORTHODOX FRIENDS CORRUPT GOOD THEOLOGY

As earlier noted, Moore, in *When Godly People Do Ungodly Things*, properly calls for discernment and stresses its importance. However, once again, she doesn’t heed her own call. In light of her bent toward mysticism, some of those she esteems should not be surprising. Yet others will be — or at least should be.

One of those who would fall into the former category is fellow Southern Baptist mystic Henry Blackaby.[34] Blackaby is one of the leading exponents of subjectivism through his writings and seminars. He is the author of the hugely popular *Experiencing God*, which offers advice on

determining God's will that is based primarily upon Blackaby's own personal experience and is largely extra-biblical. Moore holds Blackaby in high regard. She writes that she doesn't consider herself worthy to shine his shoes.[35] She also insists that Blackaby has a long track record of faithfulness.[36] Faithful Blackaby may be, but it's not a "faithfulness" to the sufficiency of the Word, nor to its proper interpretation.

Moore also admires Brennan Manning, author of the best-selling book, *The Ragamuffin Gospel* and the contemplative prayer guru whom *Christianity Today* labeled as "evangelicals' favorite Catholic." She repeatedly cites his works, including a testimony to the "insecurity, inadequacy, inferiority, and low self-esteem" he experienced in life.[37] Moore tells her readers, "What God has used Manning to bring to the mixed bag of our generation of believers may be a gift without parallel"[38] and that he has written "one of the most remarkable books I have ever read." [39]

Manning is a prominent exponent of contemplative prayer, which calls for one to empty one's mind, then fill it with imaginative experiences and allow Christ to be the source of our words and actions.

In 2005, he described to *Christianity Today* magazine how he sat out Hurricane Katrina in his New Orleans apartment so he could help numerous victims following the cataclysmic disaster. It was the stuff of which heroes are made, but it wasn't true. One week after publishing the initial interview, *Christianity Today* posted on its web site a brief editorial note at the beginning of the article. It read, "We regret to inform our readers that, following this on-the-record conversation, Brennan Manning called our office to apologize. He reiterated that he had been 'disoriented, confused, and depressed' lately and that certain details he provided were not true. ... The essential truth: I lied.'" [40]

As Moore brings her book to a close, she cites, without qualification, German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer.[41] Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) was part of the resistance movement against Hitler in the early 1940s.[42] He was involved in a failed plan to assassinate Hitler, was sent to prison, and was hanged there for treason. In January 1943, Bonhoeffer, just before going to prison, proposed marriage to a



parishioner half his age.[43] His story is very sad. From a human standpoint he was justified in helping Jews and being against fascism, but that is not the problem.

Bonhoeffer admitted in his own writings that he did not hold to biblical truth. He was ambiguous about the resurrection of Jesus and outspoken in his denials of fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. In an article, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer Rejected Classical Christology," David Becker states:

"I don't mean to be critical of people, but I do want to speak the truth in love, and one of my pet peeves is when I see people, especially those who consider themselves to be, and present themselves as, theologically conservative, praise Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Bonhoeffer espoused a so-called religionless Christianity, and expressed doubt about God as a working hypothesis. He was a father of the so-called 'death of God' 'fad' of a few years ago. He wrote a lot and also wrote some things that sounded orthodox but he consistently had a low view of the Bible, considering a lot of it myth." [44]

In reviewing one of Bonhoeffer's books, Becker writes:

"In his book, *Christ the Center* (1960, Harper & Row), Bonhoeffer wrote: 'So if we speak of Jesus Christ as God, we may speak of him as the representative of an idea of God who possesses the properties of omniscience and omnipotence (there is no such thing as this abstract divine nature!)' (p. 108). So Bonhoeffer didn't really believe that Jesus is God. ... Bonhoeffer didn't think that Jesus is sinless either. 'The assertion of the sinlessness of Jesus fails if it has in mind observable acts of Jesus. His deeds are done in the likeness of flesh. They are not sinless, but ambiguous. One can and should see good and bad in them (p. 113). ... So Bonhoeffer rejected classical christology, had a low view of the Bible, denied the deity of Christ, doubted the virgin birth of Christ, denied the sinlessness of Christ, and doubted the physical resurrection of Christ.'" [45]

Moore appears to have a propensity to cite more teachers who are off the orthodox charts than those who are on them. Equally questionable are some who help promote her. The July 2003 issue of *Charisma*

magazine devoted a nine-page spread to her and called her “one of America’s most popular ministers today.”[46]

While Charisma is presented as a magazine that holds itself to a high standard of biblical integrity, it is much closer to being the publication for a mutual admiration society of self-anointed apostles and prophets. Some of its editorial content comes from the likes of pragmatist Joyce Meyer, prosperity guru Gloria Copeland, and boisterous televangelist Paula White. It carries advertisements promoting the ministries of Oneness preacher T.D. Jakes, faith healer Benny Hinn, “singing prophet” Kim Clement, angel enthusiasts Charles and Francis Hunter, and many more. It is a mish-mash of confusion and unorthodoxy.

Many of the popular teachers whom Charisma publishes have a confused understanding of the Bible and mislead their followers with aberrant teaching. Unchecked doctrine can and does affect the lives of those who follow such a teacher. [James 3:1](#) warns that teachers will be more strictly judged.

Further, Moore’s ties to Charisma’s publishing empire go beyond gracing the cover of its magazine. Casa Creacion, the Spanish language division of Strang Communications Group’s book publishing Creation House, is the publisher of at least four of Moore’s titles in Spanish, including *Quando Gente De Dios Hace Cosas Que No Son De Dios* (When Godly People Do Ungodly Things).

At the same time, Moore began another, even closer, association with one who has strong charismatic leanings. Moore appears every Wednesday on LIFE Today, the television ministry of James Robison and his Fort Worth-based Life Outreach International. Robison is a former Southern Baptist crusade evangelist who in the early 1980s parted company with the denomination because of its resistance to charismatic revivalism. His conversion into the world of charismatic teachers and teaching came when he said he was delivered from demonic oppression. Authors Jeffrey K. Hadden and Anson Shupe offer the following details:

“In spring 1983, Robison added demonology and exorcism to his repertoire after meeting Milton Green, a Baptist layman from Tennessee

whose followers were dubbed ‘Greenies.’ In the furor that followed, Robison left the Euless, Texas, church where he was a member and took his ministry, now Pentecostal in all but name, deep into the charismatic land of tongue-speaking, healing, and prophecy.”[47]

There’s also a bit of irony in the Moore-Robison relationship. For more than a decade of Moore’s tenure as an author for LifeWay, Dr. James T. Draper was the president of LifeWay.[48] When Robison began his trek into the unorthodox world of deliverance and healing, it was Draper who was his pastor at the First Baptist Church of Euless, and who was an outspoken critic of Robison’s shift into charismatic beliefs and who, in private meetings, warned him “about his new theological direction.”[49]

It appears that Moore’s association with such teachers is shaping her theology. The “About Beth” page, featured on LifeWay’s web site, contains a quote from Moore which says in part, “God does signs and wonders that are just staggering.”[50]

Moore writes in her book, “Scripture prophesies an unprecedented outpouring of the Holy Spirit on God’s sons and daughters in the latter days.”[51] Moore’s timeframe for this statement is here and now, but she provides no biblical reference for such a prophecy. Perhaps she, like so many of the Latter Rain enthusiasts and modern day revivalists, is referencing [Joel 2:28](#) about a latter rain which is to be an outpouring of supernatural power upon the Church. If so, Moore is two thousand years late. The Apostle Peter said that the events described in Acts 2 are what was prophesied by the Old Testament prophet Joel (“this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel,” [Acts 2:16](#)).

Moore also pitches the old “double portion anointing” cliché used by Benny Hinn and others:

“Clearly, we are living in the best of days and the worst of days. While fresh winds of the Spirit are blowing upon many of our churches and a double por-tion of anointing on many believers, the Word also strongly sug-gests that we are occupying planet Earth during the scariest time in human history to date.”52

## BE STILL, BETH

In 2006, Moore was featured on *Be Still*, a video presentation supporting the mystical practice of contemplative prayer. Contemplative prayer advocates say that the technique stills one's thoughts and emotions for us to better focus on God. It is said to be a process within one which, when practiced, will experience deep and lasting transformation. In reality, it is an attempt to know and encounter God apart from His Word.

Moore says on the video:

“God’s Word is so dear that if we are not still before Him, we will never truly know to the depths of the marrow in our bones that He is God. There’s got to be a stillness. We’ve got to have time to sit before Him and just know that He is.”[53]

*Be Still* employs meditators from a variety of religious affiliations and backgrounds. In addition to Moore, others who make up the instructional video include Roman Catholic author and heretical philosopher Peter Kreft, and mystic occultist Richard Foster.

Kreft, in his book, *Ecumenical Jihad*, writes of an out-of-body experience where on a “Heavenly beach” Muhammad taught him the heart and soul of all true religion — all of which was sanctioned by God.[54] Foster is best known for his enduring volume, *Celebration of Discipline*, and in the early printings of this book he encouraged his readers to have an out-of-body experience of their own.[55]

When warning and criticism of the film’s Eastern underpinnings were issued by discernment organizations and Moore was contacted with these concerns, she responded with surprise. Her original statement confessed:

“I’m afraid I have to convey the full extent of my ignorance when I tell you with stark honesty that I wasn’t even aware of the controversy. I am not involved in any kind of emergent church movement or any kind of mystical prayer movement. ... If I have participated in something un-sound, it was hugely accidental and I ask your forgiveness. Nothing

could be further from my desire.”[56]

Portions of the video that spotlight Moore show her to be an informed and persuasive exponent of contemplative prayer. And apparently Moore’s initial regret was short-lived. Lighthouse Trails, a ministry focusing upon the Church’s drift into mystic and Eastern thought, is reporting that Moore has, through her own ministry, issued a revamped statement which says “because we certainly always stand for Truth, and because we believe that once you view the Be Still video you will agree that there is no problem with its expression of Truth.”[57]

The “Be Still” title and concept is derived from [Psalm 46:10](#) and has become the primary slogan of the contemplative prayer movement. It is, however, a verse taken out of context and misapplied to develop unbiblical teaching. [Psalm 46:10](#), in its contextual setting, has nothing to do with becoming totally silent in order to merge with the Divine. It is an exposition of God’s power, might, and majesty against those who war against Him.

Perhaps a better scriptural verse to engage would have been [Psalm 4:4b](#), “Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still.” Yet even this verse does not sanction or instruct contemplative prayer, but rather is “An exhortation not to give way to exasperation or anxiety (lit. ‘tremble in anger or fear’) but look to the Lord.”[58]

## MOORE PROBLEMS

Moore makes a lot of small mistakes and the overall accumulation of these things ends up as less-than-helpful biblical direction and counsel. But sometimes that imprecision can move into dangerous, heretical territory. A dear example of this is her declaration about Jesus and His Church that, “We are His physical body meant to flesh out His ministry to the world.”[59] If we are, as Moore states, Christ’s physical body, then something else must have been raised on the third day. Christ’s physical resurrection is the evidence for Christians that we too will be raised ([1 Corinthians 6:14](#); [15:20](#)). To imply or state otherwise is a direct denial of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). There would be little doubt that Moore holds to the bodily resurrection of Christ, yet a statement as the above demonstrates a real lack of important theological precision. It is a

shame that her editors did not catch the serious implications of such a statement.

Notwithstanding the above, for the most part the drift with Moore is so small, at first, it may be hard to detect. Consider the old analogy of the airplane that takes off from New York City and heads to San Diego. After departure it begins to veer from its intended course by only a few degrees. Initially the error is not noticeable, but the plane ends up in Anchorage.

With Moore it may be a word or phrase improperly defined, or a testimony pushed too far or generalized for everyone. Her errors are subtle, but real. Where it ends, though, is the real point, and her readers — especially the untaught or sensitive — are the ones ultimately misled.

“Seduction,” “victims,” “strong-holds,” “oppression,” and “loosing and binding” are found throughout her teachings. Questionable application and eisegesis of Scripture can be found in her writing. For example, as she details the struggle when writing *When Godly People Do Ungodly Things*, she writes: “Finally God gave me understanding and I realized that He was applying the principle Christ introduced in [Mark 9:29 \(KJV\)](#). This book — written specifically to expose one of the most insidious assaults of the evil one — would ‘come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.’”[60]

How Moore is able to correlate the instruction from our Lord to His disciples regarding the casting out of demons to the coming forth (i.e., the writing) of her book is beyond comprehension. Worst yet, Moore attributes such misuse of Scripture to God Himself, when she says that she “realized that He was applying the principle.”

Moore also disappoints those with sound biblical understanding in her use of “binding and loosing.” It is essential to note that only twice in the Gospels do we find the “binding and loosing” principle — and both instances are recorded in the Gospel of Matthew (16:19 and 18:18). Moore appeals to both references, but with unqualified interpretation. She instructs her readers:

“I want you to enlist the support of several people of godly integrity who

know how to war in prayer. Together start binding the enemy from any further work where your situation is concerned. Pray according to Matthew 16:19, asking God to bind Satan and to loose the Holy Spirit upon every single detail. Bind it from Satan in Jesus' powerful name, and loose it to the full trustworthy work of God through His Holy Spirit. As you and several others agree ([Matt. 18:19-20](#)) in binding the enemy, whatever is loosed, even if it is temporarily painful, will be from heaven and not from hell and will work for your good.”[61]

A short while later, she writes:

“The prayers of the saints to bind the enemy can ... bind the enemy! And the prayer to loose the Spirit can do just that: loose the Spirit! ([Matt. 16:19](#)). Prayer can be used of God to completely thwart any further plan of the enemy and take back what he stole.”[62]

The principles Moore here establishes for believers are an affront to true spiritual warfare. Her misguided ideology that “binding” will “completely thwart any further plan of the enemy” is foolish, illusory, and harmful. Equally faulty is her notion that we should pray “to loose the Spirit.” God is sovereign and acts according to His sovereignty. His Spirit is not limited or controlled by our prayer for Him to be ‘loosed.” Here Moore offers the very “superficial Bible lessons” and “spiritual quick fixes”[63] that are supposedly absent from her ministry.

Pastor David Kirkwood provides helpful insight toward a proper understanding of “binding and loosing” in its biblical setting. As to the [Matthew 16:19](#) passage, he writes:

‘Jesus use of those words is obviously metaphorical, as He certainly did not mean that His followers would be taking physical ropes or cords and literally binding anything or literally loosing anything that was bound with physical ropes or cords. Jesus must have used the words binding and loosing figuratively. What did He mean? For the answer, we should look at His words binding and loosing within the context of whatever He was speaking of at the time. Was He talking on the subject of evil spirits? If so, we could conclude that His words about binding have application to the binding of evil spirits. ... Regardless of the precise meaning of the metaphors, you can see that, in this passage,

Jesus did not mention evil spirits.”[64]

One could add to Kirkwood’s commentary the specific that in the passage Jesus did not mention the Holy Spirit. Moore’s direction to “loose” the Holy Spirit is foreign to the text.

Kirkwood also speaks to the issue of what is loosed:

“One final question that could be asked about that particular interpretation is this: If Jesus meant that we are to bind evil spirits, did He also mean that sometimes we should loose evil spirits? If not, then what are we supposed to loose? Some might claim we should loose God’s power, or loose His angels, or loose His protection, and so on, as some Christians often attempt to do. But where in the New Testament can we find anyone doing such things?”[65]

Finally, Kirkwood addresses the [Matthew 18:18](#) passage:

“In this second passage that mentions binding and loosing, there is absolutely nothing within the text that would lead us to believe that Jesus was speaking of binding evil spirits. Here Christ spoke of binding and loosing directly after speaking on the subject of church discipline. This would seem to indicate that in reference to binding and loosing in this passage, Jesus meant something like, ‘I’m giving you responsibility to determine who should be in the church and who should not. It is your job. As you fulfill your responsibilities, heaven will back you up.’[66]

Moore fails to understand the context and proper use of verse 18 within the framework of church discipline — which may be a biblical prescript that has eluded her. Her unfamiliarity with the process of church discipline is suggested when she writes:

“As I live and breathe, I cannot find a single time in Scripture when God called upon the popular vote of man to help Him deliver a verdict over one of His children.”[67]

Scripture tells us differently. The Apostle Paul chastised the Corinthian church for not following the Lord’s mandate of church discipline concerning an unrepentant immoral brother when he wrote, “Are you



not to judge those inside? ... Expel the wicked man from among you" ([1 Corinthians 5:12, 13](#)).

As earlier noted, not everything that Moore says is wrong or unhelpful. When dealing with the nature of Satan's control over believers, she writes:

"When self grants control to the Holy Spirit and we live within the boundaries of God's will for our lives, our wall stands firm and Satan must work from more of a distance. He is limited to opposition rather than outright oppression." [68]

Here Moore appears to have her ship dear sailing and in the right direction. Unfortunately, on the very next page she hits a reef and capsizes:

"I even think it's possible for some people to feel 'possessed' by a demon when in reality they are terribly 'oppressed.' Perhaps demonic oppression can be so powerfully 'on' a person that it can feel 'in' the person." [69]

She follows that thought up with:

"In our war with demonic powers and principalities, if (relatively speaking) opposition is a game of softball, then oppression is hardball. And if oppression is hardball, seduction is curveball. Seduction is a form of oppression." [70]

New Testament Scripture does not speak in great detail to the subject of "oppression." That is because it is found only twice within the pages of the New Testament: James speaks of the rich oppressing the poor ([James 2:6](#)) and in [Acts 10:38](#) where it is clear that it refers to Jesus casting out demons. [71] Thus, in its strictest sense — in [Acts 10:38](#) — it is connected to Jesus and is a synonym for demon possession.

"Oppression" has become a cliché and whole traditions and practices have been built around the concept. If someone is having a bad day, it very easily falls under the heading of oppression. What Moore and so many others do is take the normal struggles of daily life and

sanctification and dramatize them by turning them into some kind of theater with themselves in the leading role. There is an excess of attention on the negative and not enough focus on the positive side of salvation and the grace given to believers as Peter instructs in [1 Peter 1:13](#).

Christians would do well to scripturally reflect upon and emphasize how much occurred at the cross, and how much victory is afforded us by the grace, the Holy Spirit, and the New Covenant which is given to the believer. The devil tempts and solicits to evil, but the whole oppression notion is contrived. Such belief places the attention upon demons and violates [Philippians 4:8](#), which commands believers to focus on what is true, noble, just, pure, lovely, good, virtuous, and praiseworthy. It is hardly setting our minds on things above.

We must not lose sight of the reality of the spiritual battle. The Christian does have a three-fold enemy: the devil, the world, and the flesh. The devil knows our weaknesses and desires, but we no longer have to sin. The truth is we want to. In a biblical view, none of us is really a victim. In sin and sinful behavior there is culpability, not victimization. Claiming to be a victim, as Moore does, will bypass the necessary and appropriate biblical response. It is diagnosing the problem incorrectly then applying an incorrect remedy.

An overview of comments by Jay Adams on the book of James is most beneficial:

‘James explains, ‘The force at work within you when you turn trouble into temptation is not some foreign power that invaded you from without; it is your own desire. That is your principal problem.’ ... James doesn’t even bring Satan into the picture. You must take full responsibility for your sin. You can blame it on no one but yourself. ... It is a matter of individual responsibility in every instance. When you lust after another person, it is because of your own desires. Sin of the heart means allowing your desire rather than God’s commandments to direct you. ... We are to obey all the Lord’s commands, in the wisdom and power of the indwelling Spirit, who strengthens us to overcome sin by means of the Scriptures to which He enlightens us. ... From all of this we learn

that God holds each one personally responsible for his thoughts, imagination, acts, and words, and will allow no blame-shifting. ... Christian, resist sin at the start, as Jesus did. Abort inner sin before it is born. Augustine encourages us with these words: Pray that God may make you conqueror of yourself ... not of your enemy without, but of your own soul within. ... Let no enemy from without be feared: conquer yourself, and the whole world is conquered.”[72]

No doubt, Moore would not disagree. But therein is the problem with Moore — the helpful counsel one can find within her writing is muddled with harmful advice. And Adams is able to say, in just a few short pages, what Moore misses in her 300-page volume.

Mysticism, claims of divine inspiration and direction (apart from Scripture), unfavorable associations, questionable (and outright heretical) sources and citations in her writings, and aberrant teaching all combine to make Moore a teacher to be avoided. Christian women who desire to live godly lives and want Christ-centered, biblically profound, and doctrinally sound resources to help them to this end, would be better served by the writings of Martha Peace, Elyse Fitzpatrick, and Carol J. Ruvolo, just to name a few.

Yes, doctrinally sound books are not only important, but necessary. What we believe shapes and directs how we live. Moore seems to shy away from a healthy emphasis on doctrine when she says, “Christ didn’t give His life for church doctrine.”[73] While this is true, Moore’s comment is yet another subtle bent toward ecumenicalism and her readers are left with the sense that doctrine is unimportant.

Regrettably, well-written and biblically sound books are rare today. Christians need to exercise care, caution, and discernment in their selections. PFO has long contended that a Christian bookstore can be a dangerous place for a believer to visit. The good in such bookstores, amidst the bad and ugly, are few and far between. Yet here is another area in which Moore lacks discernment:

“God has also equipped us with more uncompromising media and materials than any generation before us have ever had, suited for everything from Christian growth to Christian entertainment. In the

United States, we have access to innumerable Christian tapes and CDs. We have all sorts of Christian magazines of excellent quality. We have tremendously well-written Christian novels. We have more Christian programming than ever before. ... God has not left us ill-equipped.”[74]

This idea is taken a step further when Moore writes:

“The quality and content of Christian magazines, music, and novels have vastly improved over the last decade or so. I believe this was divinely intended so that in a world of increasing wickedness, we’d have plenty of safe alternatives.”[75]

Moore is living in a fantasy world in more ways than one. The quality and content of Christian resources is not improving; it is getting worse. Decades ago, Christian publishing houses would have never even entertained the thought of publishing materials espousing open theism, Eastern mysticism, pop psychology, and on and on. Today it’s all commonplace. The aberrational and heretical have become the norm, while the scripturally sound has become the exception. Publishers have displaced the “Great Commission” with sales commission. The almighty dollar has supplanted the Almighty.

For all her exposition of seduction and deception, Moore fails to understand that some of the most prevalent seedbeds of deception and seduction today are the media outlets – including books, magazines, tapes, and broadcasts – hailed under the banner of “Christian.”

While readers of Moore’s books and viewers of her videos might find helpful statements, they will do so only after picking through all the error. Many Christians do not have the ability or discernment to sort through all the heresy and nonsense. And, teachers like Moore express an air of authority and boastful pride (“I had been serving God with every ounce of energy I had.”[76]).

And, as noted above, there are many other biblically solid, and humble teachers of the Word available. Time would be better invested sitting under the teaching ministries of these men and women and not have to sort out Moore’s aberrations and heresy.