

The Teachings of Roger Morneau

The book, *Incredible Power of Prayer*, is the 1998 Missionary Book of the Year in our denomination. As you know, this designation is given to inexpensive volumes which our people should purchase and share with their neighbors, as an entering wedge to convert them to our beliefs.

Since this particular share-your-faith book teaches a variety of strange non-Adventist concepts, we decided to also comment on his earlier books.

In 1990, the Review & Herald published Roger J. Morneau's book, *Incredible Answers to Prayer*. In 1993, his book, *Trip into the Supernatural*, came off the Review presses. Then, in late 1997, his 1998 book of the year, *Incredible Power of Prayer*, was released by the Review to our people.

In this study we will primarily overview the first and third of these three books.

TRIP TO THE SUPERNATURAL

In his second book, *Trip in the Supernatural*, Morneau relates the story of how, in 1946, he joined a spiritist society in Montreal, Canada, and later left them. Apparently, he became very deeply involved before he left it.

"It was 1946 in Montreal, Canada, and I met a wartime buddy who had become a member of a society that claimed to communicate with the spirits of the dead. I became involved in their practices, and before long my friend and I were led into a secret society who worshiped super intelligent, beautiful beings whom they referred to as gods. In fact, their worship room contained numerous beautiful paintings of spirits who had materialized, were photographed, then had paintings made of them."—*Incredible Power of Prayer*, 14.

THE INCREDIBLE POWER OF PRAYER

Near the beginning of this earlier book, Morneau explained that **we need to ask God to answer prayers—in order to prove to us that He does answer prayer.**

"No longer did I use vague expressions, such as 'Lord, please bless this person.' Instead I asked that God would bless a person in a specific way, so that I would then be able to see that He was answering my prayers as the very things I had asked for took place before my eyes."—*Incredible Power of Prayer*, 29.

Morneau eventually decided to begin, what he called, "intercessory prayers." These were to be based on the concept that he had special power to resist de-

monic control in the lives of others and produce various other miracles.

In the first such prayer that he offered to God, he told Him:

" 'You have honored me so greatly before the inhabitants of the galaxies and the angels of heaven by having made me a member of Jesus' resistance forces in a sin-occupied world.' "—*Incredible Power of Prayer*, 34.

Shortly afterward, in this same prayer, Morneau told God:

" 'You know, Father, that I do not hesitate to ask for the divine power of the third person of the Godhead to rebuke Lucifer and his spirit associates from controlling human lives.' "—*Incredible Power of Prayer*, 35.

Then, in the same prayer, he added this:

" 'As for myself, as an intercessor in opening the way for the third person of the Godhead to move in mighty ways for them, I would appreciate seeing my prayers answered before my eyes when I return to see the man in two weeks, and may an overflow of the Spirit's blessings shower upon me.' "—*Incredible Power of Prayer*, 35.

Later, when Morneau became worried that his intercessions for others might cease, he got an idea how his prayers could continue—even after he died!

"I began telling the Lord about my worry that my intercessions could cease suddenly, leaving others deprived of much-needed help."—*Incredible Power of Prayer*, 51.

"Here was the answer to my human limitations. I would have the Lord engrave the names of the many persons on my prayer list upon the breastplate of His righteousness. Were I to die that day, Jesus, the divine Intercessor, would continue to intercede by the mercy seat for them."—*Incredible Power of Prayer*, 51.

"Yes, I indeed have a perpetual prayer list."—*Incredible Power of Prayer*, 52.

With the passing of time, Morneau expanded his powers to having God, at his request, forgive the sins of others.

"What a wicked man, I thought to myself. Then I immediately prayed, 'Jesus, please forgive them. By the mighty power of Thy Holy Spirit, please rebuke the demonic forces oppressing their minds.' "—*Incredible Power of Prayer*, 66.

"A new dimension had been added to my Christian experience. Never before had I asked the Lord to forgive someone."—*Incredible Power of Prayer*, 66.

Morneau decided that this was a key to bringing others to Christ: Pray that their sins might be forgiven—before they ever came to God in repentance. His reasoning was that, because Christ in answer to his prayers, had already forgiven their sins—it would be easier for them to come to God.

“That’s it, I said to myself. My first concern in praying for the ungodly and the wicked is to ask Jesus to deal with their burdens of sin. My heart rejoiced in the fact that my Lord is an expert in salvation, specializing in hopeless cases. As I was driving home, my heart filled with thanksgiving over His infinite goodness and grace.

“I prayed that if it were pleasing in His sight I would like to have another similar experience, one that would again demonstrate the power of the Holy Spirit to bless once the burden of sin has been removed.”—*Incredible Power of Prayer*, 67.

There is no doubt that persevering prayer for others is powerful, and that we should do it more. Yet there is danger in imagining that we are little gods, able to intercede with Heaven on behalf of others and remove their sins from them. Catholic priests claim that power, but only Christ has it.

After reading Morneau’s first book on intercessory prayer (*Incredible Answers to Prayer*, published by the Review in 1990), a number of Adventists apparently decided that his prayers were more powerful than theirs. They began sending him lengthy lists of names to add to his prayer list.

“The Lord has been good to me. I have several very dear friends, and instead of giving you a few names to place on your prayer list every time I write, I decided to send them all at once. I shall let you know as providence unfolds in each of their lives.”—*Incredible Power of Prayer*, 90-91.

Those who read Morneau’s book considered it urgent that names of their friends be added to Morneau’s prayer list, since, unlike their own petitions to God, his would be “perpetual”; that is, continue on after his death.

“Long ago I prayed that I would find my greatest joy in asking the Spirit of God to bless the lives of those whose names were on my perpetual prayer list.”—*Incredible Power of Prayer*, 92.

Morneau begins by first asking that Christ’s merits will be applied in a special sense to the life of the unbeliever he is about to begin praying for.

“Before I pray for a person who does not serve God, I first ask that the Father will appropriate the merits of Christ’s blood to the person in need, always conscious that the individual’s redemption has already been paid for.”—*Incredible Power of Prayer*, 108.

Morneau tells of a woman who, having read his earlier book, recognized exactly what he was teaching:

“When I read in your book that we can pray for the Lord to forgive another’s sins,’ she said, ‘I was astounded, and began praying for my husband with new faith and hope.’”—*Incredible Power of Prayer*, 108.

“I wrote back to assure her that the Holy Spirit would surely minister the graces of redemption to the man as she and I sought God’s help.”—*Incredible Power of Prayer*, 110.

It is obvious that some of Morneau’s concepts strongly border on the truth of how prayer works. Yet he interjects concepts which are clearly not correct.

Of course we should pray for people, and it is well to ask others to pray for them. We should plead with God that He will especially impact the lives of the ones we are praying for. But we are to pray that they will be convicted of their sins and come in repentance, so they can receive forgiveness and peace with God.

In strong contrast, Morneau prays not that they will be convicted of sin, but that they will receive forgiveness of their sins and peace with God, so that they might then come to God and continue that experience of peace.

Morneau also believes that, through prayer, he can keep Satan from tempting someone. Because of his prayers, Satan will be blocked from tempting the person being prayed for.

“With this man, as with everyone else I pray for, I relied on the mighty power of the Holy Spirit to overpower, and render nonoperative, the enemies of Jesus Christ and all those He is determined to save.”—*Incredible Power of Prayer*, 110.

There are several encouraging stories in this book. It is unfortunate that Morneau intermingles his intermediary theories with it.

The truth is that the person who sins must come to God and earnestly plead in sincerity of heart if he is to receive forgiveness of sin! No one else can directly or indirectly forgive his sins for him.

Here is what God’s Word says:

“There is need today of such a revival of true heart religion as was experienced by ancient Israel. **Repentance is the first step that must be taken by all who would return to God. No one can do this work for another. We must individually humble our souls before God** and put away our idols. When we have done all that we can do, the Lord will manifest to us His salvation.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 590.

INCREDIBLE ANSWERS TO PRAYER

Before concluding this study, let us briefly look at Roger Morneau’s earlier book which the Review also published: *Incredible Power of Answers to Prayer*.

While laying in a hospital bed in 1984, following an attack of congestive heart failure, Morneau prayed that all the patients in the entire hospital be forgiven their sins.

“Now I asked for the mighty power of the Holy Spirit of God to surround everyone with a spiritual atmosphere of light and peace and to restore them to health if it was His will. As you will see in later chapters, I had learned through personal experience that intercessory prayers are most effective when I have made sure that sin is not separating the subjects of my prayers from God. I began my prayers in that intensive care unit by thanking God for the privilege of asking for His divine help for my fellow patients.

Pointing to the infinite price He had paid at Calvary, I asked Him to forgive everyone's sins."—*Incredible Answers to Prayer*, 11.

It is obvious that Morneau is quite settled in his belief that a Christian can put away other people's sins—before and quite apart from their own decision to do so, or even interest in doing so.

"For a long time, it has been my conviction that as Christians we ought to do for others what they cannot or are unwilling to do for themselves—to deal with the sin in their lives."—*Incredible Answers to Prayer*, 11-12.

Morneau's belief has a strange Catholic ring to it, and it should be kept in mind that he was raised a Roman Catholic before he became a spiritualist (*pp.* 15-16).

Frequently we encounter phrases and concepts which are oddly foreign to the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy.

"What a fantastic victory for Christ God's Holy Spirit had achieved in that place."—*Incredible Answers to Prayer*, 28.

Morneau teaches yet another error: We can pray that God will answer our prayers in but one way which we select, and He will do it.

"I asked that God would bless a person in a specific way, so that I would then be able to see that He was answering my prayers as the very things I had asked for took place before my eyes. In other words, I was learning to pray meaningful prayers."—*Incredible Answers to Prayer*, 39-40.

Meaningful prayers or demanding prayers?

"If the Lord sees it will best honor Him, He will answer our prayers."—*2 Testimonies*, 148.

Here is part of one of Morneau's prayers to God:

"As for myself, as an intercessor in opening the way for the third person of the Godhead to move in mighty ways for them, I would appreciate seeing my prayers answered before my eyes when I return to see the man in two weeks, and may an overflow of the Spirit's blessings shower upon me."—*Incredible Answers to Prayer*, 48.

On page 55, Morneau assures his Adventist readers that they should expect, very soon, to witness mighty miracles done by God. Not repentance in their lives, nor in the church, but miracles is the event to be sought.

"It is my belief that mighty miracles of redemption will soon take place through the power of intercessory prayer as the Holy Spirit leads vast numbers of God's people into such a prayer ministry for the unsaved."—*Incredible Answers to Prayer*, 55.

The Spirit of Prophecy is quite clear that we are not to rely on miracles, nor expect them; for, in the final crisis, Satan will apparently work mighty miracles. We dare not trust in miracles.

It should be kept in mind that Morneau came from a background in the occult. Recalling his earlier life as a member of a satanic organization, he says:

"There I was, a man that conversed with demonic spirits. Thoughts of God were the farthest things from my mind."—*Incredible Answers to Prayer*, 56.

Morneau conveys the impression that he has a "power" which others do not seem to have. He tells how, after conversion, even his boss at work was im-

pressed with his remarkable "power."

"My boss reminded me of some difficult business calls he had made with me as an observer in the past, and how impressed he had been of the way I had handled them.

"Roger, I am aware that a great power accompanies you, and I would like the folks here to be made aware of it also. Will you take the challenge, and make me proud of you?"—*Incredible Answers to Prayer*, 62.

Morneau replied:

"I can see that it will take a miracle from God to make a success of this undertaking, but trusting in His power, I believe all will turn out well. I will accept the assignment."

"Within 10 days I had closed the account and increased the billing substantially."—*Incredible Answers to Prayer*, 62.

So this "great power" included the ability to swing more business contracts and make more money for his employer.

As in his other book, **Morneau mentions how he had already arranged that, after his death, his prayers for others would continue.**

"I asked myself, 'If I were to die, who would plead for the merits of Christ to be appropriated to those on my prayer list?'"

"Another question popped into my mind: How could I assure that daily intercessions would be made for those who are now receiving help from the Holy Spirit, lest they once more become perplexed, distressed, and oppressed?"

"With a sense of helplessness, I told myself, 'What I need is some kind of perpetual prayer list.' I don't know why I said that, but I did, and the thought stuck in my mind.

"As a result, I began telling the Lord about my worry that my intercessions could cease suddenly, leaving others deprived of much-needed help."—*Incredible Answers to Prayer*, 68-69.

"Here was the answer to my human limitations. I would have the Lord engrave the names of the many persons on my prayer list upon the breastplate of His righteousness. Were I to die that day, Jesus, the divine Intercessor, would continue to intercede by the mercy seat for them. Yes, I indeed have a perpetual prayer list. And . . . over the decades it has grown to hundreds of individuals."—*Incredible Answers to Prayer*, 70.

Morneau next turned his attention to his concern to remove other people's sins, so they could come to God. He asks Jesus to forgive sinners before they themselves ask for it.

"What a wicked man, I thought to myself. Then I immediately prayed, 'Jesus, please forgive them. By the mighty power of Thy Holy Spirit, please rebuke the demonic forces oppressing their minds, and bless their lives with the sweet peace of Thy love.'"—*Incredible Answers to Prayer*, 83.

All this, without any repentance, up to this point, on the part of those who need to be seeking it. (Later, as we earlier noted, Morneau moved on to the next

logical step: If God could forgive people without their seeking it, why should he, Morneau, not be able to ask God to do this for large numbers of sinful people who happened to be in a building at the same time?)

“A new dimension had been added to my Christian experience. Never before had I asked the Lord to forgive someone. Only a sense of shock had impelled me to pray for them. When the verbal abuses started to fly, I realized that the man probably hadn’t asked for his sins to be forgiven in many years. Knowing that sin separates between God and man, I sensed the urgency of the moment and asked the Lord to give both of them special help.”—*Incredible Answers to Prayer*, 83.

According to Morneau, **when he prays for the impenitent, he not only asks God to forgive their sins, but even to remove the burden of sin from them. One might ask, how can God forgive sin and take away the guilt from those who have no heart sorrow over sin, and have not confessed and forsaken them? How can God do this for men who are living in open defiance and rejection of Christ?**

Yet Morneau apparently believes that, as a result of his prayers for others, their past sins are forgiven and eliminated; thus he provides them with peace of heart!

This is Morneau’s reasoning:

“To the paralytic who was hoping for physical healing, Jesus said, ‘Thy sins are forgiven thee’ (Luke 5:20). First the Lord removed from the helpless man his burden of sin, then He did the next best thing, that is, heal his infirmity. At Simon’s house, when a woman seeking peace for her soul anointed the Saviour’s feet with expensive ointment, Jesus said, ‘Thy sins are forgiven . . . Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace’ (Luke 7:48, 50).

“That’s it, I said to myself. My first concern in praying for the ungodly and the wicked is to ask Jesus to deal with their burdens of sin. My heart rejoiced in the fact that my Lord is an expert in salvation, specializing in hopeless cases.”—*Incredible Answers to Prayer*, 84.

But, first, Jesus is the Saviour of mankind; Morneau is not. Only Christ can forgive sin; only He can decide when it should be granted.

Secondly, Jesus forgave people when they asked Him for it. When we come into His presence, through personal prayer, we are confronted with the enormity of our sin and guilt—and, in response to our heart cry for forgiveness and purity, Christ forgives and accepts us as His children. There is a world of difference between this and what Morneau wants God to do.

Morneau prays that the sins of others will be forgiven, and that peace and harmony with God will come into their lives—while those people continue to be far from Him.

One day, encountering a rude, angry man, Morneau

prayed that the man’s sins might be forgiven:

“Please help me to see this man not as he is now, but as he will be by Your grace on that great day when you will resurrect and translate the people of Your righteousness.”

“Immediately a sense of pity for the man filled my heart, and I continued to pray. ‘Wash away the condemnation that he has brought upon himself by his wicked deeds. Break through, I pray, the gigantic wall of separation that he has erected to hide himself from Thy face, thereby depriving himself of the sweet peace of our heavenly Father’s love and grace.

“Lord through the power of Thy Holy Spirit, please rebuke the demonic forces that may have been oppressing this man’s mind, driving him to sow misery in the lives of others. And having done this, please surround him with a divine atmosphere of light and peace as Thy Spirit abides with him this day, speaking to his heart of the ways of righteousness. Thank You, Lord, for always hearing my petitions for help to the needy.’”—*Incredible Answers to Prayer*, 86.

In the above prayer, Morneau asks God to wash away the evil man’s condemnation. But only as the sin is removed by the man’s personal acceptance of, and faith in, Christ as His Saviour can that be done.

Part of the above prayer was good. It is well to ask God to rebuke the demonic forces working on a man, but it is not our right to ask Him to remove the guilt and condemnation from the sinner and grant him a fullness of peace with Heaven.

It is of interest that Morneau never talks about the Ten Commandments or the need of obedience to God’s Word. Instead, justification by proxy seems to be his focal point. This new theology stance may be the reason why the Review was so willing to publish Morneau’s books.

In support of his position, Morneau quotes *Desire of Ages*:

“A quotation from the *Desire of Ages* came to mind, ‘Earnest, persevering supplication to God in faith . . . can alone avail to bring men the Holy Spirit’s aid in the battle against principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and wicked spirits in high places’ (p. 431).”—*Incredible Answers to Prayer*, 92.

However, upon opening to that page, we find it does not apply to praying for others:

“They must be emptied of self and be filled with the Spirit and the power of God.”—*Desire of Ages*, 431.

Religion by proxy vote is not sufficient. Union with Christ is a personal matter, personally achieved, personally entered into.

Frankly, it is shocking to think that the 1998 *Missionary Book of the Year* in our denomination is a book by Roger J. Morneau. He may be a very fine man; but, unfortunately, he has some mixed-up ideas. —*vj*