

tion. Though apocalyptists have miscalculated prophetic timetables, the apocalyptic perspective on human nature, social, political and ecclesiastical institutions, evil, goodness, history and the place of Christ in history has proved powerfully accurate. Richards could not be more wrong when he suggests that apocalypticism “is not a twentieth-century world vehicle of truth.”

Marxism, the illegitimate child of the Judeo-Christian tradition, illustrates the vitality of a fundamentally apocalyptic ideology throughout most of the globe. Within Christianity itself — including Seventh-day Adventist Christianity — the only growing edge has been among Third World apocalyptists. Even in North America, best-selling paperbacks from 1984 to *The Late Great*

Planet Earth reflect the appeal of an apocalyptic worldview.

Actually, I think it is not the historical argument on nineteenth-century American Adventism or the call for a renewal of the apocalyptic spirit in twentieth-century Adventism that has drawn criticism of the article. It is the question of what this does to our understanding of Ellen White as a prophet that provokes concern. It is perhaps all too revealing of a major shift in Seventh-day Adventism from the nineteenth to the twentieth century that Adventists would rather give up a sense of apocalyptic urgency — by hanging on literalistically to the signs of earlier times — in order to preserve a particular understanding of Ellen White’s authority.

Jonathan Butler

Scrivens on Music

To the Editors: The recent article, “Another Look at Ellen White on Music” (Vol. 10, No. 2) proves again that Mrs. White can be made to support almost anything. After reading and rereading all that I can find on what she has to say on music, I have to conclude that her writings do not support the overall conclusions of the unnamed historian.

I would like to address myself briefly to just two of the problems I feel exist in the article. I believe the most basic problem is that the author draws conclusions based on silence. Because Ellen White never applauds the music of Franck, *et al.*, she is made to condemn them. Would we want to follow this principle elsewhere? How much of Ellen White’s counsel on sexual relations in marriage are strongly positive? Can we imagine a letter like this: “Dear Brother and Sister A., The Lord has shown me that you have a marvelous sex life. My counsel is to keep it up and enjoy yourselves.” We rightly say that the negative tone of her counsels on sex—she uses words like “baser passions,” “shameful animalism,” “debasing lust”—come through because she was writing to

people who had problems. Her near silence on the positive, therefore, should not be construed to condemn the proper enjoyment of a God-given gift. Couldn’t the same be true of music? Surely, if the music of Franck is to be condemned, it needs to be on better grounds than the silence of Ellen White.

A second problem I find stems from the fact that the author seems to forget that all inspired counsel needs to be viewed in its cultural context. We’ve managed pretty well concerning the bicycle issue, but we very well may miss concerning music (as I feel this article does). When Paul and Silas sang in jail, it resulted in an earthquake and several conversions. Does this mean that we should consider first-century Jewish music the proper music for our needs? Or would it be better if we used the hymns the angels sang to some South Sea Islanders a few years ago? Surely the angels wouldn’t sing anything but the best. Those hymns were, of course, simply what the people had been taught by the missionaries, and so the angels used the music of the newly Christian culture of the islands. The music of Franck would have been meaningless to Paul and Silas as well as to the

South Sea Islanders. Nor would it have had the same meaning to Ellen White's culture as "Blessed Assurance." For while the music of Franck was in existence when Ellen White wrote, it certainly was not an important part of the culture she was addressing. But to argue that anything more complex than "Blessed Assurance" is ruled out for all time by Mrs. White is to do violence to the basic principles she was enunciating. For while principles must be enduring, the applications must, of necessity, change for each time and place.

I believe the article in question would have been of more value were it to have clarified certain principles and then suggested applications for our own time and culture. I think at least four principles are clear from the material in the article: 1) Music should have an important place in worship and soul-saving. 2) Music (of any kind) must not be all-absorbing and take the place of purely spiritual pursuits such as prayer and the study of Scripture. 3) Music of a frivolous, "low" character should be avoided by Christians. 4) Music, especially that used in worship, should not be of such a character as to draw primary attention to the performer. Cannot thoughtful Christians find applications for these principles today?

Carlyle Manous, Chairman
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To the Editors: In a recent issue of *SPECTRUM*, I read, with troubling interest, the article about Ellen White, "Another Look at Ellen White on Music." After careful perusal, I was left with the disquieting feeling that some things had been left unsaid. I find it difficult, for example, to relate a view of church music as presented to other ideas of Ellen White. In several of her writings, she emphasizes the idea that we are all privileged to develop our latent, God-given abilities to the limit. Given that assumption, where are musicians left when presented with the above opinion? If those of us with musical abilities keep learning and growing in our interpretation and presentation of the music literature,

it is a good guess that we would not be content to keep playing gospel for long. Musically, it is no challenge. The point was made in the article that in heaven our musical background won't be helpful, for, after all, we will be given musical abilities there—it comes with the territory, so to speak.

The above stand also implies that the composers of the cultural tradition did not express their relationship to, and view of, God in a proper way. That sounds pretty judgmental to me. J. S. Bach, whose music was primarily written for the church and often inscribed to God, is a good example of the cultural tradition. Is his music not then to be played?

Another point. My mind's ear has always heard majestic strains of music when reading the biblical passages about heavenly music. I cannot see the angels utilizing their inestimable abilities to perform "gospel" music endlessly.

Ellen White makes a point that more time needs to be spent in prayer, and too much has been spent on preparing music. She also said there wasn't enough time to spend on music, that we should be seeing to other things instead. First, I'd be interested in knowing to whom the counsel was given, or whether it was meant for the church as a whole. What was the context? I'm particularly interested in this considering the excellent article on the Bible Conference, which clearly indicated what a narrow field of vision we generally use to view Ellen White's comments. I still feel a lot hasn't been said, and out of what has been said, several rigid assumptions have been formulated. Please, we need breathing room, for, after all, these counsels by Ellen White are to be prayerfully considered by individuals, to find the meaning for them personally.

The Sabbath after I finished reading the music article, I attended the Green Lake Church in Seattle, as a visitor. There, I reveled in the orchestral accompaniment to the hymns, enjoyed the hymn variations on "Sine Nomine" during the congregational singing and the postlude, all beautifully performed on the pipe organ. I felt transported heavenward. Perhaps that was wrong?

Jeanne Fleming, Ph.D.

To the Editors: Chuck and Marianne Scriven's "Another Look at Ellen White on Music" was disturbing to me because I feel it was suggesting interpretations or directing readers' thoughts toward interpretations of Ellen White's comments on music which may not be what she intended. I reject their interpretation of what Ellen White wrote on artistic beauty in the Roman Church coupled with theological error, etc., to mean that she asserts ". . . high art has no place in the worship of God, and that its presence must be taken as an evidence of inward corruption." I do not read that into Mrs. White's statement at all. I believe God is a lover of the beautiful and that He has placed within His creatures not only appreciation for beauty (which might include complexity), but also the ability and the desire to create. This is evidenced in nature as well as in the sanctuary and temple services and appropriations which He ordained. I believe Mrs. White was not condemning artistic beauty, but rather a lack of real spirituality and truth which, when covered by artistic beauty, becomes a deception. I doubt she is saying that truth and real worship, on the one hand, and high art, on the other, are mutually exclusive. I believe what she really meant was that *without* the fruits of the Spirit in the lives of the worshipers, high art is an offense to God, and that much attention to art with little time devoted to prayer, meditation, Bible study and witnessing is a sin.

It seems to me that one principle underlies Ellen White's emphasis on simplicity in sacred music. That is that we must keep whatever is done in our services on the level of understanding of the congregation. That is why, contrary to what some of our music educators have felt, I have always sensed a need for a mixture of simple music and hymns with more artistic music in our churches. While I personally might find a real elevating spiritual experience from listening to, or participating in, music which might be considered high art, still there are those who would not be thus inspired. Their needs must be ministered to also. Ellen White was an extremely sensible person. If she had been raised in this day when the media brings high

musical art within easy reach of most everyone, if she had been raised (as I have) to appreciate and derive spiritual elevation from more complex music than the camp-meeting-type song, she would probably have expressed herself in such a way that what she wrote could not be interpreted to mean that only the most elementary music is of any value in the worship of God.

"These statements are one more unneeded bit of encouragement for the gospel-type singing groups who persist in bringing the 'vernacular' music of our day into the church."

The other thing that bothers me about this article is the statement: ". . . her objections continued to be based entirely on nonmusical grounds." Also, "Musicians skate on even thinner ice when they presume to attack music in a currently popular idiom set to sacred words, for Ellen White's own precedent suggests that she might approve of it, if directed toward spiritual ends." I hope all your readers take note of that little word "might" in the last sentence. These statements are one more unneeded bit of encouragement for the gospel-type singing groups who persist in bringing the "vernacular" music of *our* day into the church. Her objections were based on nonmusical grounds because the simple vernacular music of her day had no objectionable musical features such as dance rhythms, blues harmony and croony singing. It was not, to use Ellen White's words, "fit for a dance hall." But *our* vernacular music, replete with its dance rhythms, blues harmony and croony singing, is one of the most sacriligious travesties the devil has pulled off on the church. It's nothing like the vernacular music which Ellen White accepted. There is no doubt in my mind that if Ellen White were living today, it would come in for more severe condemnation than any music she ever wrote about. Operatic singing in the church was

not the only music she condemned. She also said that the theater and the dance were unchristian. Even so, we fit up sacred lyrics with the sensuous sounds, rhythms and harmonies of the theater and the dance—blues came from vaudeville which was the theater of her day, and croony singing is hardly the clear, melodious singing she recommended; the dance rhythms need no comment—and we call it sacred music when, without the words, it sounds just like any entertainment hall music and has the same sensuous effect.

I just hope and pray we can keep our thinking in the middle of the road and help others to do the same!

Martha Ford
Greenwich, New York

To the Editors: I am grateful to Chuck and Marianne Scriven for their article on Mrs. White and music. However, I am at the same time somewhat fearful that their revelations may be abused by those who would look to Ellen White as a proof text answer to every dispute (the dispute being, in this case, the unholy row between the supporters of “popular” church music and their “serious” opponents). Indeed, it is possible that the sinking of the *haute culture* crew may have merely prepared the way for the launching of an even more formidable text-ridden juggernaut.

What is most remarkable about the Scrivens’ article is that it should even have had to be written (a reflection not on the Scrivens, but on certain members of their audience). For how else should Mrs. White have felt on the topic, when the likes of Charles Ives also recognized the largely false pretensions of the European-American musical tradition and the comparative honesty (“in spite of a vociferous sentimentality”—Ives) of the camp-meeting and gospel hymns? Ives, also, was impressed with the fact that American music in the “cultivated” tradition was predominantly used (especially in rural America) as a way of flaunting social status and not of expressing sincerity. That is why Ives’ compositions are filled with old hymn tunes in massed, camp-meeting-style voices—and

why he had a choice list of names for the local high-society musical organizations and their “pretty” tastes.

But the important thing that Charles Ives had (and that Mrs. White didn’t have) was a solid musical background—and an exceptional ear to go with it. Therefore he, unlike Mrs. White, was able to recognize the greatness of many composers despite the mutilation of their music by “lily pad” musicians. Mrs. White, on the other hand, was compelled to associate the music with the musicians, and hence to denounce wholesale the “cultivated” tradition, music and all. Ives, through his musical genius, was able to separate the music from its milieu—Mrs. White was not.

Thus, it would seem to be a rather fruitless enterprise to examine Mrs. White’s statements on the value of musical types. For, in fact, she was in no way qualified to be a music critic. Mired in a small-town camp-meeting tradition and with an inadequate musical training, she was in no position to serve as a public judge of musical worth.

However, this is not to imply that her opinions on music should simply be ignored. It is to imply that if we intend to learn from Mrs. White on the subject of music, we must find what general characteristics she saw in unacceptable (to her) musical traditions, and not what music she associated with them. If I am correct in determining these characteristics to be ostentation, encouragement of congregational passivity and intempered frivolity, I believe I can surmise what would be her opinion of the popular recording-touring Adventist artists of today, with their often easy sounds. And I am not sure she would feel the same way about the “cultural” tradition, a tradition now well divorced from the “sentimental ears” of the small-town and liturgical music committees, and now subject to a growing audience of well-educated (musically speaking), thoughtful, and definitely *not* passive, ostentatious or frivolous Adventists.

Russell Stafford

To the Editors: I write to express appreciation for your publishing the Scrivens’ article

(Vol. 10, No. 2). It is enlightening. It furnishes a background against which to assess the value of Ellen G. White's comments on music of all kinds.

At the same time, it is difficult, for at least two reasons, to assess the significance of the article. First, according to the editorial footnote, the Scrivens are only redactors for an unnamed author; second, the author leaves the subject suspended in midair, failing to bring the discussion to a conclusion or choosing to leave it incomplete. There must be many readers who hope that the article is no more than the first, rather than the last, word on an important and fascinating topic.

The article abounds in points that cry aloud for responses that cannot be contained within a necessarily brief letter to the editors.

“Must we expect Mrs. White to adjudicate on every aspect of culture? Can we not admit that some areas lie outside her competence. . . ?”

We need a workshop type of gathering for discussion of the wide subject on which the article has only just touched. Here there is room, however, for one inescapable question: If, as stated, “sacred music in the vernacular was the music Ellen White found most congenial,” can we expect her to provide us with any reliable yardstick for measuring music that lies outside that lowly range? Must we expect Mrs. White to adjudicate on every aspect of culture? Can we not admit that some areas lie outside her competence, and that other mature, educated Christians might be capable of providing trustworthy guidelines in fields for which her environment and aesthetic standards provided little if any basis for conclusive judgment? Willingness to allow such a less rigid approach to music would spare us from adopting untenable positions in respect of the most heavenly of the arts—music.

B. E. Seton
Etowah, North Carolina

The Scrivens Reply

To the Editors: As a general point, we wish to emphasize that the article is a historical study concerning Ellen White and music. We ourselves, in preparing for publication a manuscript originally composed by someone else, have lent our names and efforts to an attempt to describe what *is the case* about the past, not to say what *ought to be the case* today. With respect to the individual letters, we make just these few remarks.

Dr. Manous appears not to have attended carefully enough to what the article actually says. He asserts that on the basis of Ellen White's *silence* concerning music of the cultivated type (what he means, presumably, by the phrase “the music of Franck, *et al.*”), we invalidly conclude that Ellen White disapproved of it. She did, apparently, disapprove of it, but we have not drawn this inference from her silence, as readers may see by consulting pages 46, 47 and 50 of the article.

In the main, Dr. Fleming's comments do not so much take issue with our conclusions as express puzzlement concerning what they might mean. No doubt other readers share this puzzlement. As for the article itself, it was not meant to solve the problems it raises, though it would be useful, of course, to try to do that.

With respect to Mrs. Ford's letter, we may only say that her own private beliefs and conjectures do not count decisively against the interpretation put forth in the article. That interpretation, by the way, could not be used in support of the “gospel-type singing groups” now popular in our church, as readers will see by noticing page 44.

Mr. Stafford says that despite Ellen White's lack of a “solid musical background,” we can still find value in her opinions by attending to the distinction between the behavior and attitudes she associates with certain types of music and the characteristics of the music itself. This is an interesting suggestion, though it presupposes a view of Ellen White's inspiration that would itself have to be defended.

Charles and Marianne Scriven

On Divorce

To the Editors: This is a brief comment on Marvin Moore's article "Divorce, Remarriage and Church Discipline" (Vol. 10, No. 2).

The premise for his discussion is stated in the first paragraph, reading "Our church has followed the lead of other conservative bodies and placed the entire responsibility on the church to determine what are the grounds for divorce and remarriage, and when they have been met." Then follows the statement "An entire chapter of the *Church Manual* outlines the policy in great detail." We would ask the question "Should our church follow the lead of other conservative bodies, or should we follow the Bible?"

It has been the observation of many that when a premise is error, that which follows cannot be relied upon to be truth. When we research into just how the *Church Manual* came to be changed on this subject, back at the 1950 General Conference, we cannot help but wonder if God had anything to do with the change. (See page 8 of our book, *God's 7th Commandment*).

The writers are in perfect agreement with the reading of the *Church Manual* on this subject prior to the General Conference of 1950. The 1942 *Church Manual* read, "That a church member who is the guilty party to the divorce forfeits the right to marry another, and—should such a person marry another he be not readmitted to church membership so long as the unscriptural relationship continues." Under this ruling, all a pastor would have to say to a couple seeking readmission to the church would be, "The Bible calls your marriage sin (Matt. 19:9, and Rom. 7:3) and the *Church Manual* forbids it, so you will have to seek salvation outside of church membership." It is the present *Church Manual* that is trying to follow guidelines that will circumvent the plain teaching of scripture—that these are adulterous marriages and result in "sin in the camp" that is delaying the work of the Holy Spirit in coming with Pentecostal power to finish the work. Hours upon hours are taken of the time of our church leaders in trying to determine where the blame lies and

how to judge repentance without forsaking the sin, and in the making of guidelines to fit all cases (an impossible job that we humans are not called upon to have anything to do with). It calls for our ministers to "play God" in forgiving sin, a fact that they have been slow in considering is a fact, or they would recoil with horror at the idea. The old *Church Manual* was as workable as the 10 Commandments—specific and to the point, and did not accommodate the sinner who did not put away his sin.

We want unity in our church—but not at the expense of breaking a Commandment of God.

Roy O. Williams, D.D.S.
Marguerite S. Williams, M.D.
Grand Terrace, California

Moore Replies

To the Editors: The Doctors Williams completely misunderstood the basic premise of my article on divorce, remarriage and church discipline. It is not that Adventists have followed the lead of other denominations in this area. What they take as my basic premise is in fact only a passing comment that could have been left out with no damage whatsoever to my basic point.

My premise is that since the church allows its members the freedom to interpret Scripture for themselves in critical moral issues such as tithe paying, abortion, bearing arms and Sabbath work in non-SDA medical institutions, we ought to do the same in certain cases of divorce and remarriage. I do not mean that the church should refuse to take an official position in these matters. We have very official stands on Sabbathkeeping, tithe paying and bearing arms. But we do not necessarily discipline every member whose Scripture-enlightened conscience allows him to act contrary to the official position in certain situations.

I recognize the need for a strong policy on divorce and remarriage that provides for discipline in certain cases. This is necessary both to protect the church from scandal that would damage its reputation, and to protect the Christian home. However, I also recognize the need of Christians to live their lives

according to their personal convictions. Surely, we ought to be able to devise a policy that protects the church and the home while granting a measure of freedom to members to make moral decisions, based on their view of Scripture, and to act on them without the threat of discipline.

The Doctors Williams have developed a nationwide campaign to get the church to enforce biblical morality on divorce and remarriage as they understand it. I do not doubt their sincerity, but I believe their position is untenable. Should the church adopt their views as official policy, then I propose that it also make all decisions for its members in matters of tithe paying, abortion, bearing arms, Sabbath work in non-SDA institutions and similar important moral issues. Those members who refuse to live in harmony with official policy should be disfellowshipped in order to clear out all evil from our midst. How else can we expect to be ready for the Lord to come?

That is the logic behind the Doctors Williams' reasoning on divorce and remarriage. Since divorce and remarriage without Bible grounds is neither the only sin among us nor the worst, then to be consistent we must follow the same policy regarding all sins. Conversely, if we allow members to exercise their own judgment in other areas, then in principle there is nothing wrong with providing for a degree of personal judgment with respect to divorce and remarriage. I do not advocate that the church surrender all authority or discipline in this area, but I do see a need for a greater balance than we now have between church authority and individual conscience. That is the basic premise of my recent article in SPECTRUM.

Marvin Moore
Keene, Texas

On Creationism

To the Editors: Dr. Roth (Vol. 10, No. 3) suggests that I ignored or overlooked critical evidence on the validity of the ecological zonation theory (EZT) by not referencing the original comprehensive description. I

will concede that *The New Diluvialism* recognizes the existence of my five objections. However, we obviously disagree over whether these objections have been "answered" in any satisfactory manner in the original or subsequent descriptions of the theory. The shorter, later and more readily available description of ecological zonation referenced in my paper adequately summarizes the original theory including the specific points raised by Dr. Roth.

Roth has correctly observed that I "simplified" EZT. It was not clear in my paper that the restrictions placed on EZT after the phrase "if the theory is to have any interpretive validity . . ." (p. 7) were my own restrictions, not those of previous authors. In its usual form, EZT does not provide assertions that are easily verifiable or falsifiable, as

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Roth points out. It is little more than a rephrasing of the *belief* that "fossils are the result of a worldwide Flood," couched in language that indicates some familiarity with the data of geology. The two major departures of EZT from present ecology as listed by Roth are tacit admissions that the pre-Flood ecology required to fit EZT to the fossil record bears little resemblance to the modern science of ecology and that similar ecologies (based on modern analogs) are distributed throughout the geological column (see my original objections #1, 2, 4). With these two modifications, one can justifiably wonder whether the usual meanings of the words "ecological" and "zonation" correctly describe the content of the theory.

The usual formulation of EZT is an exercise in circular reasoning: fossils are zoned ecologically and the ecology is determined

by the zoning. As such, it is no better a basis for developing a Flood model in the scientific sense of explaining cause and effect than is the more “simplified” but testable version evaluated in my SPECTRUM article.

Even if one removes the ecological and zonation part of the theory from the realm of testability, the problem of antediluvian source areas remains (see my original objections #3, 5). Here it is definitely not true that “almost any directly related data one comes up with can be fitted into either model,” if one uses data of appropriate generality for the problem. I would suggest that the realm of possible models is a little wider than the either/or situation proposed by Roth.

Dr. Brown’s (Vol. 10, No. 3) reformation of the literal creationism statement on time is essentially *the theological basis* for my statement, but provides no explicit assertions or hypotheses that are testable in the world of scientific data and thus would not be useful within the context of my article. Dr. Brown’s own work in the area of geochronology shows that at least he takes my more explicit formulation seriously enough to attempt to show that its opposite counterpart, the long ages hypothesis, is not supported by facts. This is simply a negative rather than positive use of my formulation.

Brown feels more at home in exegetical discussions than I do, and as I stated in my article, I have no particular expertise to agree or disagree with his comments on the interpretation of Genesis 1:1.

Unfortunately, references 2 and 3 cited in Brown’s letter have little if any relevance to the problem discussed in my article. Brown’s picturesque “graveyard hoax model” (GHM) is simply a more poetic version of my statement that “fossils themselves are rarely dated and minerals from the enclosing sedimentary strata are *rarely* suitable for age determinations.” This GHM cannot be used

as a general paradigm for geochronology in general as I tried to point out in my article. Such a use may explain the serious misinterpretation of data used in footnotes 2 and 3. The “ages” quoted by Brown in reference 2 have nothing to do with the more simple procedure of determining the age of formation of the actual rocks examined. The particular type of “geochronology” under discussion in reference 2 is irrelevant to the topic of my SPECTRUM article.

Modern geochronology is a highly developed and complex subject, much of which is irrelevant to the age of fossils. A failure to properly distinguish the type of work under discussion renders a mere recital of concordant or discordant dates (selection dependent on motive) irrelevant since no indication is given of the type of event supposedly dated or of particular geological factors that may suggest a given date might be good or bad. Much of the data discussed by Brown in reference 3 is of this nature. In the prime exhibit of reference 3, the supposed disagreement between the radiometric “age” and the apparent geological age of rock formation is caused by a failure to recognize and/or heed the original authors’ caution that the “ages” they calculate have no relation to the *formation time* of the rocks under discussion; in fact, such an age cannot even be calculated from their data for most of these rocks.

It is unfortunate that there is no spoken or written forum currently available where technical aspects of creationism such as these can be discussed and refined by scrutiny so that a more defensible, and therefore effective, apology for the biblical view might emerge from conservative Christian circles, especially, of course, our own church.

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