unchristian in modern secular cultures, despite the Moslem predilection for honor killing. On the other hand, God deplored the polygamy of David and Solomon, who capitulated to the prevailing cultural practices of surrounding nations.

Adventists around the world, at least officially, respect the absolute principles enunciated in Scripture, despite the fact that dramatic cultural differences in dress, diet, marriage practices, ordination issues, music tastes, and modes of worship sometimes result in disagreement. But when there is mutual respect and consistent commitment to the absolute teachings of Scripture, those differences cease to be divisive. The same gospel message is successfully propagated.

Erwin R. Gane
Angwin, California

As I was reading “Hermeneutics and Culture,” I was disappointed that when it came to the most important question of the article, “Whose Biblical Hermeneutics?” the response focused mainly on theology, nationality, ethnicity, and gender—and overlooked the most important aspect, in my opinion, which is age.

There is a great age disconnect in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The church leaders and intellectuals would serve the church much better if they would address the question of the youths’ biblical hermeneutics. The church, especially in the developed world, is losing its youth, and one of the ways that might help is to relate this transcultural truth of the Scripture to the youth in a culture of the youth, using the language the youth understand.

Gureny Lukworo
Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

Just as important as it is today, church leadership was a vital issue in the early Christian Church.

Formal leadership roles in the early church can be broadly categorized into three types, two of which disappeared in the subapostolic period. Because the dynamics that influenced this development are still in effect, what happened in the first century of the history of Christianity can be instructive for the church in our own time.

Though the threefold categorization of ministry types is useful, it must be conceded at the outset that the distinctions are not always sharp, that the same person could represent more than one type of ministry and thus come under more than one category. It should also be noted that development was not uniform and proceeded at different

By Robert M. Johnston *

Leadership in the Church During Its First Century

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rates in different localities.

The three types, listed in order of appearance, can be characterized as (1) charismatic, (2) familial, and (3) appointive. The term *charismatic* does not represent the modern connotation, but in the original sense based on Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12. The main distinction among the three types focuses on the mode of reception and basis of authority. Charismatic leaders received a direct divine call. Familial leaders were blood relatives of Jesus. Appointive leaders were elected in some fashion by the church.

**Charismatic Ministry**

The first type of ministry can be called charismatic because it was marked by the bestowal of a spiritual gift and is listed among the *charismata* (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 28; Eph. 4:11-13; 1 Peter 4:10, 11). For the purposes of this article, the most important feature of this type of ministry is that a person was called to it directly by Christ or His Spirit. It was not an office to which one was elected or humanly appointed. It was a function to which a person was divinely called. The church could extend its recognition of that calling, but the reception of the calling did not depend upon such recognition and normally preceded it.

In the beginning, Jesus chose, called, and appointed 12 men to be with Him, and to be sent out to preach and have authority to cast out demons (Mark 3:14, 15). The parallel in Matthew 10:1 calls the Twelve “disciples.” Luke 6:13 adds that Jesus named them apostles. The term *disciples* reflects Mark’s remark that they were to be with Him, while *apostles* was an appropriate title for those who were to be sent out. Luke is apparently using the term technically as a title, for Jesus is said to have named them thus. Both Matthew and Luke, immediately after their reports of the calling of the Twelve, describe their being sent out on a missionary journey. Mark reports this mission in his sixth chapter and there uses the title *apostle* in verse 30.

Apostles represent the one who sends them and come with the authority of the sender to the extent that they faithfully fulfill the mission that is committed to them. In John 13:16 Jesus says: “Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him.” The Twelve were sent out by Jesus as His representatives with the assurance, “He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me” (Matt. 10:40).

The 12 chosen by Jesus were the apostles *par excellence*. The number 12 was significant, corresponding to the 12 patriarchs and 12 tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28; Rev. 21:12-14). They were clearly not Jesus’ only disciples, but they occupied a special place in the scheme of things.

So important was the number 12 in the thinking of the infant church that they felt it necessary to fill the vacancy left among the 12 apostles by the defection of Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:15-26). “The Twelve” was so firmly established as a synonym for the original group of apostles that Paul referred to them thus even when they had become only 11 (1 Cor. 15:5)! Furthermore, it was important that the office not be seen as bestowed by human choice or appointment, so the vacancy was filled by casting lots after prayer (Acts 1:23-26). The words of the prayer are significant: “Show which of these two You have chosen” (vs. 24). But Peter, who chaired the meeting at which this occurred, did lay down special qualifications that must be met even to be considered as a candidate: an apostle must have been an eyewitness to the resurrection of Jesus (vss. 21, 22; cf. 2:32). This meant only being an eyewitness to the risen Lord, able to give personal testimony to seeing Jesus alive after He died, since none of the Twelve had actually seen the resurrection event itself occur.

The lot fell on Matthias, about whom we read nothing more in the New Testament. But that is true of most of the Twelve.

It is understandable, then, that the earliest Christians in Palestine, all Jews for whom the Twelve were especially significant, were unwilling to concede that anyone other than the Twelve could be a legitimate apostle. But this limitation was shattered by the divine calling of Paul to the apostolate in a development that was vehemently resisted by many. Paul needed constantly to defend his apostleship. In 1 Corinthians 9:1, 2 he did so by insisting on his qualifications: he was an eyewitness to the risen Lord (a claim supported in 15:8 and by Acts 9:3-5; 22:6-11) and had done the work of an apostle. In Galatians 1:11-19 he argued that by revelation he received his commission directly from the Lord, not from any human authority or body,
so that his apostleship was in no way inferior to that of the Twelve.

With Paul as the point man, as it were, for expanding the apostolate, the number soon increased. Both Paul and Barnabas are called apostles in Acts 14:4, 14. The list that can be compiled from the New Testament also includes at least Apollos (1 Cor. 4:6, 9), Silvanus and Timothy (1 Thess. 1:1), Titus (2 Cor. 8:23), and Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25). It must also include Andronicus and a woman, Junia (Rom. 16:7). In three of Paul’s letters we find lists of spiritual gifts, and in three of these lists we find apostles, in each case heading the list (1 Cor. 12:28; 12:29, 30; Eph. 4:11). By placing apostleship among the charismata, Paul completes its democratization, making it available to anyone to whom the Holy Spirit should choose to distribute it.

Another gift associated with leadership is prophecy. Ephesians 2:20 declares that the church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone. The sequence “apostles and prophets,” rather than “prophets and apostles,” suggests reference to the New Testament prophets, not those of the Old Testament.

While apostleship occurs in only three of Paul’s lists, prophecy appears in all of them. In Peter’s Pentecost sermon, he begins by quoting Joel’s prediction that in the last days your sons and your daughters will prophesy, and God will pour out His Spirit on His menservants and maidservants (Acts 2:17, 18). The Book of Acts is witness to the presence of prophets in the early church—often several in one congregation. Thus, in the church at Antioch, five prophets and teachers (13:1, 2) are named. They included Barnabas and Saul (Paul), who are elsewhere known as apostles. This shows that the reception of one gift did not preclude others, and indeed apostles at times had visions and delivered inspired speech. Philip the evangelist had four unmarried daughters who prophesied (21:9), and in the next verse we read of Agabus, also mentioned in 11:28, whose prophesying was of a near-term predictive nature.

The Corinthian church also included multiple prophets, including women, who were instructed to do their public prophesying with their heads covered (1 Cor. 11:3-10). Paul told the Corinthian Christians to desire especially the gift of prophecy (14:1), and apparently several members had it, for they are admonished to speak one at a time: “Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion but of peace” (14:29-33).

To us, the idea may be startling, not only that one small house church might have several members who prophesied, but also that their utterances were to be evaluated. Furthermore, the prophets were to maintain enough self-control that they were capable of stopping and yielding the floor. Thus, Paul did not approve of some sort of ecstatic enthusiasm.

Familial Leadership

The brothers of Jesus did not believe in Him during His earthly ministry (Mark 3:31-35; John 7:5). Something apparently happened, however, to bring them to belief, and this was probably the special post-resurrection appearance of Jesus to His brother James (1 Cor. 15:7).

As a result, at least James and perhaps other brothers not only came to be counted among the early believers, but also became leaders in the church. Two New Testament epistles (James and Jude) are traditionally ascribed to them. James became the leader of the Jerusalem church when Peter fled (Acts 12:12-17), and thereafter he was the respected leader of Jewish Christianity.

When Paul visited the church leaders in Jerusalem after his conversion, he conferred only with Peter and James the Lord’s brother, whom he seemed to count among the apostles (Gal. 1:18, 19). This James presided at the council that deliberated about what to require of Gentile converts to the gospel (Acts 15).

In a later fateful visit to Jerusalem, Paul called upon James, who counseled him to make a gesture to placate the Jewish Christians (Acts 21:17-24). The incident portrays James as a mediator between Jewish and Gentile Christianity, forestalling a schism that later did take place.

Jewish Christianity, as was natural, continued to regard the blood
The selection of seven deacons was a far more momentous event than is commonly recognized because it inaugurated a completely new type of ministry and church leadership. It was this type that was destined to prevail over the other two kinds and to replace them. It is therefore worth pausing to examine it.

Twelve from among the Hellenistic Jewish Christians were chosen by the surviving relatives of Jesus, who had already had a significant ministry. The laying on of hands—whether from the apostles or the elders—does not signify the bestowal of a spiritual gift; the Seven were already full of the Spirit, and that was one of the reasons that they were chosen (Acts 6:3). But the recognition of the gift by the community by the laying on of hands, as in the cases of Paul and Barnabas and of Timothy (Acts 13:2, 3; 1 Tim. 1:18; 4:14), was continued. Second, they were chosen by their peers, apparently elected in some fashion. Third, their office was created for pragmatic reasons, to fill a need (Acts 6:3). Fourth, they received the laying on of hands—whether from the apostles or the whole community—and this ceremony gave them some authority that they lacked before.

The people set apart in this way are explicitly depicted as Spirit-filled leaders, who have already had a significant ministry. The laying on of hands by those assembled therefore does not signify the bestowal of a ministry, or of the Spirit, but rather that from now on their ministry is no longer an individual one: they are from this point on representatives of their community. What they do, they do not undertake in their own name, but in the name of the community that has set them apart as its representatives.”

What was the office assigned to the seven men of Acts? The office is not named. It has been traditionally assumed that they were deacons, perhaps because the words diakonia and diakonein are used in 6:1, 2. But the use of this word and its cognates is hardly decisive, for in 6:4 and 1:25 the same word is used for the ministry of the apostles. It is necessary to lay aside conceptions and distinctions that developed later. The words diakonein, diakonia, and diakonos mean, respectively, “to serve,” “service,” and “servant”; or “to minister,” “ministry,” and “minister.” But the fact is that the word diakonos (“deacon”) is never used in the Book of Acts. On the other hand, presbyteros, meaning “elder,” is frequent and used as a title for a church officer.

The first occurrence of presbyteros with the latter meaning is in Acts 11:30, where we are told that the famine relief for the Judean believers that Barnabas and Paul brought was delivered over to the elders. In other words, the kind of work for which the Seven were appointed in Acts 6 is said to be done by the elders in 11:30. Furthermore, the way elders were appointed in the churches as reported in 14:23 resembles the way the Seven were chosen. The word used in this verse is cheirotonoe, which literally means to raise one’s hand in voting. Finally, in Acts 15 we hear of only two offices in Jerusalem, those of apostle and elder. We must conclude that the

relatives of Jesus with respect as leaders. Hegesippus (the second-century Jewish Christian historian), cited by Eusebius, supplies the names of some. James was succeeded by his cousin Simon (Simon bar Clopas), under whose leadership the Christians of Jerusalem fled to Pella during the Jewish war. He was chosen by the surviving relatives of Jesus.2 He was crucified in A.D. 107. The relatives of Jesus were known as the desposynoi, “which can perhaps be translated the “Master’s people.” The last in this line, counted by Eusebius as the last Jewish bishop of Jerusalem, was Judas surnamed Kuriakos, probably martyred in the time of the Bar Cochba rebellion.

We hear no more about the desposynoi after A.D. 135. If any survived, they would have been associated with the increasingly isolated Ebionites.

Appointive Leaders

Acts 6 reports that administrative questions threatened to distract the Twelve from their ministry of preaching and teaching (vss. 1, 2). The Hellenistic Jewish Christians were complaining that their widows were not receiving what they should in the daily distribution of supplies to the needy. The apostles directed that the believers select seven men, of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, to perform this work (vs. 3). This was done, and judging from the Hellenistic names of the seven, they were chosen from among those who had complained; indeed, one was a proselyte (a Gentile who had become a Jew). They brought the Seven before the apostles, and having prayed they laid their hands upon them. This was the beginning of the appointive ministry, leaders selected by the people and given authority by the laying on of hands.

This action was a far more momentous event than is commonly recognized because it inaugurated a completely new type of ministry and church leadership. It was this type that was destined to prevail over the other two kinds and to replace them. It is therefore worth pausing to examine it.

First it should be noted that the laying on of hands did not bestow a spiritual gift; the Seven were already full of the Spirit, and that was one of the reasons that they were chosen (Acts 6:3). But the recognition of the gift by the community by the laying on of hands, as in the cases of Paul and Barnabas and of Timothy (Acts 13:2, 3; 1 Tim. 1:18; 4:14), was continued. Second, they were chosen by their peers, apparently elected in some fashion. Third, their office was created for pragmatic reasons, to fill a need (Acts 6:3). Fourth, they received the laying on of hands—whether from the apostles or the whole community—and this ceremony gave them some authority that they lacked before.

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church at this early stage knew of only one appointive ministry, which Luke designated elder.

But what of the traditional designation of the Seven as deacons? It must be recognized that to begin with there was only one appointive ministry. The Book of Acts records no other. Since there was only one, the officer could be called either diakonos (suggested by diakonein in 6:2), a word describing function, or presbyteros, a word describing dignity. Only later did this one appointive ministry bifurcate into two levels or ranks, and the two terms came to be used to designate the two levels of ministry. A similar branching into two ranks took place still later, making a distinction between bishop and elder, terms that earlier had been interchangeable. The final result, in the time of Ignatius, was a three-tiered ministry of bishops, elders, and deacons. When the appointive ministry was first begun, when it was only one without any ranks in it, the office could probably be best described in a hyphenated term, elder-deacon.

The first indication of a distinction between elder and deacon is in the salutation of Philippians 1:1, mentioning bishops and deacons. This is now a two-tiered ministry, indicating that bishop was still synonymous with elder. That elder and bishop were synonymous terms can be demonstrated from several New Testament passages. In Acts 20, the same people are called elders (presbyteroi) in verse 17 and overseers (episkopoi) in verse 28. In Titus 1:5-7, Paul speaks of appointing elders and then lists the qualifications of bishops (compare 1 Timothy 3:1; 4:14; 5:17, 19). The distinction between deacon and elder/bishop is hardened in the pastoral epistles, especially in 1 Timothy 3:1-13.

As in many young religious movements, the shape of the leadership was fluid and evolving. It should not be surprising to see local variations, as well as change over time. Though Paul is able to address a church in Philippi that has a twofold formal leadership, at Corinth it is another matter. There is no mention of any officers. No elder presides at the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:21), and no treasurer receives the contribution for the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 16:2). Apparently Paul finds no one there trustworthy to lead. Rather Paul himself is their pastor, by remote control. He sends representatives to check up on them, and he sends letters to guide them.

For better or for worse, further development occurred. Soon after New Testament times, the office of elder/bishop bifurcates into elder and bishop, just as elder/deacon had bifurcated earlier. Ignatius of Antioch, writing about A.D. 108, promoted the threefold ministry of deacon, elder, and bishop with such vehemence that implies it was a relatively recent innovation.

The twofold ministry was still the pattern when Clement of Rome wrote to the church of Corinth about A.D. 95, as it was for the communities represented by the early church manual called the Didache, which in its present form would date about A.D. 135. But hardly had another generation passed before the threefold hierarchical ministry with the supremacy of the bishop prevailed and became the norm. Not only that, but the other types of leadership had disappeared or were disappearing, at least in the mainstream church that became catholic orthodoxy. The desposynoi apparently had simply become extinct. The apostles and prophets had been replaced by the bishops, the gifts of the Spirit by elected officers.

The Disappearance of Apostles and Prophets

In 1936, A. G. Daniells, former president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and colleague of Ellen White, published a book in which he sought to show that “The gift of prophecy was to abide with the church from Adam to the second advent of our Lord . . . . It did not cease with the apostles, but is traceable through the centuries to the last days of human history, just before the return of our Lord.” We must look for the gift, however, in minority, dissident, remnant movements. The book’s burden was to recount, through Scripture and history, instances to prove this, including such examples as the Montanist movement in the second century and the Camisards among the Huguenots, and culminating with the ministry of Ellen White, whom Daniells had known personally. One senses that Daniells would have been deeply distressed had he foreseen that Adventist history would continue more than 90 years without an acknowledged living prophet. But it is a situation with ample precedent.

Pharisaic Judaism and its successor, Rabbinic Judaism, believed that the prophetic gift had died out after
Jesus’ warning in the Olivet discourse against false christs and false prophets (Mark 13:22) probably has primary reference to a phenomenon in Judaism preceding the catastrophe of A.D. 70, well reported by Josephus, but Christians would have had no difficulty in reapplying it to Christian claimants.

Zechariah, Haggai, and Malachi, and hence closed the canon. Already Psalm 74:9 laments, “There is no longer any prophet; Nor is there any among us who knows how long.”

First Maccabees 9:27 says, “Thus there was great distress in all Israel, such as had not been since the time that the prophets ceased to appear among them” (cf. 4:46; 14:41). The apocryphal Prayer of Azariah declares, “At this time there is no prince, or prophet, or leader” (verse 15). The Rabbis declared, “When Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, the last of the prophets died, the Holy Spirit disappeared from Israel.”

What this meant to the rabbis was that the prophets are replaced by the scribes, and instead of new revelation, there is exegesis of old revelation. There is no more torah left in interpretation, there is exegesis of old revelation. There is no more torah left in interpretation, there is exegesis of old revelation. There is no more torah left in interpretation, there is exegesis of old revelation. There is no more torah left in interpretation, there is exegesis of old revelation.

Indeed, they may have seen this development as a fulfillment of the prophecy in Zechariah 13:2-6: “I will . . . cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to depart from the land. It shall come to pass that if anyone still prophesies, then his father and mother who begot him will say to him, “You shall not live, because you have spoken lies in the name of the Lord.” And his father and mother who begot him shall thrust him through when he prophesies. And it shall be in that day that every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies; they will not wear a robe of coarse hair to deceive. But he will say, “I am no prophet, I am a farmer; for a man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.” And one will say to him, “What are these wounds between your arms?” Then he will answer, “Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.””

These words reveal the reason for the disappearance of prophecy in Israel: False prophets had brought the claim of having the prophetic gift into disrepute. This belief was not universal, for among common people there remained a lively willingness to accept prophetic manifestations. It was well enough established to influence attitudes toward John the Baptist and Jesus. The need of leaders was to maintain control. There was ever a danger that that popular enthusiasm for a charismatic leader might get out of control.

This feeling also explains the phenomenon of pseudepigrapha, especially popular in the Qumran community. Since new prophets were out of the question, the composition of prophetic writings, whether true or false, had to be done in the name of dead prophets.

As the shift comes from Judaism to Christianity, already in the Apocalypse, itself written by a prophet, there is a concern about the false: The church in Ephesus is commended because they have tested those who call themselves apostles but are not, and found them to be false (Rev. 2:2).

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In the little church manual known as the Didache, a major concern is false apostles and prophets—the two are lumped together. Chapter 11 lists some six tests to apply to them, for example: “When an Apostle goes forth let him accept nothing but bread till he reach his night’s lodging; but if he ask for money, he is a false prophet” (vs. 6). Clearly, the worry is about false apostles/prophets, who were bringing the gift of prophecy into disrepute by exploiting the name of Christ (12:5).

True prophets, however, were still to be welcomed (13:1). There is in 15:1, 2 an intimation of another reason for uneasiness about prophets: “Appoint therefore for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, meek men, and not lovers of money, and truthful and approved, for they also minister to you the ministry of the prophets and teachers. Therefore do not despise them, for they are your honorable men together with the prophets and teachers.” Why would the bishops and deacons be despised? Because the charismatic prophets and teachers were more exciting and constituted an uncontrollable locus of power in the church.

One reason that the bishops were able to take over from the apostles and prophets was that some of them claimed divine inspiration. Thus Clement of Rome (in the name of the Roman congregation) wrote: “You will give us joy and gladness, if you are obedient to the things which we have written through the Holy Spirit” (1 Clement 63:2).
Ignatius wrote: “Even if some desired to deceive me after the flesh, the spirit is not deceived, for it is from God. For it knoweth whence it comes and whither it goes and tests secret things. I cried out while I was with you, I spoke with a great voice,—with God’s own voice,—Give heed to the bishop, and to the presbytery and deacons. But some suspected me of saying this because I had previous knowledge of the division of some persons: but He in whom I am bound is my witness that I had no knowledge of this from any human being, but the Spirit was preaching, and saying this, ‘Do nothing without the bishop, keep your flesh as the temple of God, love unity, flee from divisions, be imitators of Jesus Christ, as was He also of his Father.’”

Thus the transition from apostles/prophets to bishops could be a relatively smooth one. As the Didache said, “They also minister to you the ministry of the prophets and teachers.”

So the prophetic gift faded out because it fell into disrepute. It happened in Israel and in the early church. But about the year A.D. 156 there was an attempt to revive it by a man named Montanus, who also reinvigorated the expectation of the imminent second coming of Christ. Associated with him were also two prophetesses, Prisca and Maximilla.

So the prophetic gift faded out because it fell into disrepute. It happened in Israel and in the early church. But about the year A.D. 156 there was an attempt to revive it by a man named Montanus, who also reinvigorated the expectation of the imminent second coming of Christ. Associated with him were also two prophetesses, Prisca and Maximilla.
little impact on the rest of what we believe. The doctrine of creation is so prominent in the Bible and in the writings of Ellen White—and is so intimately connected with other fundamental beliefs—that a change in this point inevitably will affect other foundational teachings of the Bible that we as Adventists uphold.

Creation recently has been termed “the Sine Qua Non of Adventism.” It is “an article of faith on which the Seventh-day Adventist Church stands or falls.”

Further, Ellen G. White and her statements on creation and related issues inevitably raise some important questions. From its inception, the Adventist Church has maintained that Ellen White was inspired in the same manner and to the same degree as biblical prophets, even though Adventists believe that her writings are not “another Bible.” A recent book on the fundamental beliefs of the Adventist Church, published by the Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, unambiguously states: “The writings of Ellen White are not a substitute for Scripture. They cannot be placed on the same level. The Holy Scriptures stand alone—the unique standard by which her and all other writings must be judged and to which they must be subject.”

This is also expressed in the official Fundamental Belief 18, entitled “The Gift of Prophecy,” which asserts that the writings of Ellen G. White “also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested.” At the same time, Fundamental Belief 18 affirms that “her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction.”

Therefore, her statements on creation and the origin of life raise crucial questions on important topics such as the nature and scope of inspiration, the relationship between the writings of Ellen G. White and the Bible, proper hermeneutics, and the authority of inspired writings as they relate to science.

These issues and their implications are crucial not only for our understanding of Ellen G. White and her statements on creation and evolution, but also for our understanding of the biblical position on creation and related issues.

Ellen G. White Affirmed Creation

There is no need to spend much time in recounting that Ellen G. White did believe in Creation and affirmed it time and again. Yet it is helpful to be reminded briefly of a few aspects that were affirmed by Ellen G. White with regard to creation:

• Ellen G. White affirmed a supernatural creation. According to
Ellen G. White, creation was not the result of natural causes. Rather, in creation the agency of a personal God is manifest: “the earth came forth from the hand of its Maker.” For Ellen White, the power to create is “the prerogative of God alone.”

All things were created by God. Hence, the creation of humankind did not take place through impersonal factors in nature, but through “the agency of a personal God.” Thus, humanity was the crowning personal factors in nature, but through “the agency of a personal God.”

All things were created by God. For Ellen White, the power to create forth from the hand of its Maker. “Ellen G. White affirms a creation in six literal, historically consecutive 24-hour days. Ellen G. White not only affirmed a supernatural creation through a personal God, but she also described creation as having taken place in six literal, historical, consecutive, contiguous, 24-hour days. The days of creation were not “vast, indefinite periods, covering thousands or even millions of years.” To her, “each successive day of creation . . . consisted of the evening and the morning, like all other days that have followed.” In other words, the days of creation week were real 24-hour days, as we know them today.

She was shown “that the first week, in which God performed the work of creation in six days and rested on the seventh day, was just like every other week.” Thus, the seventh 24-hour day of creation week formed the basis of the institution of the Sabbath day at the beginning of the world. The Sabbath was instituted at the close of creation week. Therefore, the Sabbath is as old as the world itself and is a memorial of creation and a commemoration of creation for all humankind. Ellen G. White acknowledges: “Just how God accomplished the work of creation in six literal days he has never revealed to mortals. His creative works are just as incomprehensible as his existence.”

Ellen G. White affirmed a recent creation. In contrast to very long periods of time for the development of life on this earth, Ellen G. White clearly rejected “millions of years,” as would be “required for the evolution of the earth from chaos.” Neither did Ellen G. White propose indefinite periods of time since the beginning of creation. Instead, for her, the age of the earth should be measured within a short chronology of a few thousand years. She clearly connected a short chronology with the reliability of the biblical record and warned that those who try to “account for God’s creative works upon natural principles . . . are upon a boundless ocean of uncertainty.” She stated: “I have been shown that without Bible history, geology can prove nothing.”

Ellen G. White wrote that “the bones of human beings and of animals found in the earth, are much larger than those of men and animals now living” and added that “the time of their existence, and how long a period these things have been in the earth, are only to be understood by Bible history.”

Thus, in contrast to very long ages, as proposed by evolutionary theory, and in contrast to the so-called active “gap” or “ruin and restoration” theory, in which matter and life were supposedly created eons ago and multiple cataclysms and creations took place over a very long time period, Ellen G. White supported a recent creation of life and humans and probably even matter.

Thus, in contrast to very long ages, as proposed by evolutionary theory, and in contrast to the so-called active “gap” or “ruin and restoration” theory, in which matter and life were supposedly created eons ago and multiple cataclysms and creations took place over a very long time period, Ellen G. White supported a recent creation of life and humans and probably even matter.
To Ellen G. White, atheistic, evolutionary theories are incompatible with biblical faith. To connect these ideas with biblical creation would be a wrong attempt to bring natural science and Scripture into harmony. To uphold the biblical account of creation only because science’s picture of physical process has relaxed in the 20th century so that it is congenial to religious belief would make faith dependent upon science, and science the final authority of faith.

hilo in these statements, Ellen G. White did not support the existence of life forms on earth before the six-day creation. She upheld a high view of life forms on earth before the six-day creation. She trusted the theological value of science in the view of God’s involvement in this world. This raises the question of her relationship to natural science.

Ellen G. White and Science

While Ellen G. White clearly affirmed a literal understanding of the biblical creation account, she was not antagonistic toward natural science. The words science and sciences occur frequently in the writings of Ellen G. White. She used the word science in a variety of ways. Often she used the word science in its root meaning of “knowledge” (from the Latin scientia).

Thus she wrote of “the science of salvation,” the “science of the Bible,” the “science of Christianity,” or the “science of cooking.” When the apostle Paul visited Athens, he “met logic with logic, science [knowledge] with science, philosophy with philosophy.”

She also used the word science to describe physiology, which she called “the science of life,” “the science of human life,” or “the science of health.” It was especially in the area of health and medicine that Ellen G. White appreciated the findings of medical science, and encouraged Seventh-day Adventists to enter these fields. She referred to the work of medical missionaries as “scientific work.”

It was the study of nature, however, that she called “natural science.” She believed that “Natural science is a treasure house of knowledge from which every student in the school of Christ may draw.”

Statements like this make it clear that Ellen G. White was not antagonistic toward natural science. She did not keep faith and science separate from each other or relegate faith and science to different areas that have nothing to do with each other. This would have meant that faith is no longer relevant to all areas of life. Instead, she was convinced that God is the ultimate author of Scripture, and she also believed that “God is the author of science,” and therefore, “. . . . rightly understood, science and the written word agree, and each sheds light on the other.” This raises the important question of the relationship between Scripture and science, especially as it touches upon questions in the area of creation and evolution.

The Relationship Between Scripture and Science

Perhaps one of the most important and encouraging aspects of Ellen G. White’s understanding of the relationship between Scripture and science is the confidence that both can be in harmony.

For Ellen G. White, nature and the Bible have the same author, and therefore one can expect harmony between them. “Rightly understood, science and the written word agree, and each sheds light on the other.”

The revealed Word of God and the natural world will be in agreement, for “all truth, whether in nature or in revelation, is consistent with itself in all its manifestations.” Thus, for Ellen G. White, there was indeed a friendship between faith and science, but not in the sense that God brought into being a creation that evolved according to evolutionary processes for billions of years.

To her, atheistic, evolutionary theories were incompatible with biblical faith. To connect these ideas with biblical creation would be a wrong attempt to bring natural science and Scripture into harmony. To uphold the biblical account of creation only because science’s picture of physical process has relaxed in the 20th century so that it is congenial to religious belief would make faith dependent upon science, and science the final authority of faith.

Ellen G. White was keenly aware that such harmony is not possible when modern science is conducted independent of any acknowledgement of God and even in opposition to God’s Word. She wrote: “I have been warned that henceforth we shall have a constant contest. Science, so-called, and religion will be placed in opposition to each other, because finite men do not comprehend the power and greatness of God.”

This science, falsely so-called, is based on human conceptions and theories to the exclusion of the wisdom of God as revealed in His written Word. She warned that “when professedly scientific men treat upon these subjects from a merely human point of view, they will assuredly come to wrong conclusions.
... The greatest minds, if not guided by the word of God in their research, become bewildered in their attempts to trace the relations of science and revelation.\textsuperscript{42} For her, “One of the greatest evils that attends the quest for knowledge, the investigations of science, is the disposition to exalt human reasoning above its true value and its proper sphere. Many attempt to judge of the Creator and His works by their own imperfect knowledge of science.”\textsuperscript{43}

When natural causes are the sole explanation for what did take place in creation and the subsequent history of this Earth, “[s]cience, falsely so-called, has been exalted above God.”\textsuperscript{44} She specifically warned “against the sophistry in regard to geology and other branches of science falsely so-called, which have not one semblance of truth.”\textsuperscript{45} In other words, Ellen G. White opposed a naturalistic worldview of science that excludes God from scientific enterprise.

A harmonious relationship between Scripture and science can occur, however, if science is integrated into faith in such a way that Scripture is retained as the superior and ultimate authority. Ellen G. White wrote in 1894: “Science, so-called, human reasoning and poetry, cannot be passed on as of equal authority with revelation.”

**A harmonious relationship between Scripture and science can occur, however, if science is integrated into faith in such a way that Scripture is retained as the superior and ultimate authority. Ellen G. White wrote in 1894: “Science, so-called, human reasoning and poetry, cannot be passed on as of equal authority with revelation.”**

In contrast to so-called science, Ellen G. White believed that true science is in harmony with Scripture. From this perspective, it is possible that science and faith can work together in friendship and in harmony. It has been correctly pointed out that “the platform from which Ellen White considered the natural sciences was the Bible. She had absolute confidence in Scripture and believed that everything, including scientific theories, had to be measured by the Word of God.”\textsuperscript{46} For Ellen G. White, “The Bible is not to be tested by men’s ideas of science, but science is to be brought to the test of the unerring standard.”\textsuperscript{47} This means that she integrated natural science into faith. The integration of science into faith implies that faith—or Scripture—has priority over science.

It seems that Ellen G. White was well aware of the theory of evolution that was firmly entrenched in the scientific community at the beginning of the 20th century, particularly in regard to geology, which had developed the most detailed account of evolutionary thought and the need for long ages. Therefore, she seemed to mention especially the science of geology in connection with the issues in creation and evolution. “Geology has been thought to contradict the literal interpretation of the Mosaic record of the creation. Millions of years, it is claimed, were required for the evolution of the earth from chaos; and in order to accommodate the Bible to this supposed revelation of science, the days of creation are assumed to have been vast, indefinite periods, covering thousands or even millions of years. Such a conclusion is wholly uncalled for. The Bible record is in harmony with itself and with the teaching of nature.”\textsuperscript{48}

At this point, we should remember that while nature and science have God as their author, neither Scripture nor Ellen G. White attribute the quality of inspiration to nature or science. The Bible is God’s inspired book. Nature and science are not. Nature is God’s creation and came into existence through God’s special design. As such, it reveals something about God, its creator. But nature and science are not inspired.

Furthermore, nature, as it presently exists, is affected by sin. Therefore nature may render an ambiguous perspective that needs the clear and trustworthy authority of God’s inspired Word in describing the origins of life on this earth. While Ellen G. White frequently used the phrase “the book of nature” to speak of God’s creation as revealing something about God’s love and power, she clearly differentiated and distinguished “the book of nature” from the “pages of inspiration,” thus indicating that to her the Bible is the final authority.

**Implications and Prospects for the Seventh-day Adventist Church**

On the basis of the priority and superiority of Scripture, some re-
We as Adventists actually have an advantage over non-religious scientists because our worldview is broader and more open to dimensions that are closed for secular scientists. To respect the biblical creation account and the inspired insights of Ellen G. White on the issue of creation should motivate us to be even more careful in our scientific and theological work than perhaps a non-religious scientist might be because we accept the biblical record (and the insights of Ellen G. White) as inspired and thus as something intrinsically sacred.

Remarkable possibilities open up to the believing scientist and theologian. As paleontologist and biologist Leonard Brand has said: “One who accepts the Bible as a reliable record of events is not hampered by that worldview, as many would claim, but actually has an advantage. Most scientists are only familiar with one basic understanding of earth history and do not actively ask critical questions of their paradigm.” In other words, faith does not prevent the believer from thinking. It rather enables the believer to think properly—according to God’s revealed will—and thus to search for creative, new solutions that are in harmony with God’s Word.

Thus, rather than adapting biblical ideas to the latest outlook in science, Scripture can have a unique influence on science by asking questions that could function as a source of inspiration in developing new strategies of scientific research. Wolfhart Pannenberg’s remarkable words deserve to be taken seriously: “The theologian must not be too quick to adapt theological ideas and language to the latest outlook in the sciences, especially where such adaptation requires substantial readjustment of traditional doctrine. The theological vision of the world can also function as a challenge to science and as a source of inspiration in developing new strategies of research.” Such a perspective opens up new windows of opportunities for fresh investigation of origins on the basis of Scripture.

To Ellen G. White, being a Seventh-day Adventist meant, among other things, affirming recent, literal creation in six consecutive 24-hour days. In dealing with the complex issues of creation, we have to remember that our faith cannot be based on science as our final authority, but must be based on God’s Word—even when we have questions without answers. As Brand has aptly stated: “The God of the Bible is the greatest scholar of all time, and Scripture deals in the highest levels of scholarship, not just in comforting inspirational themes. (When God arranged to have Genesis written, He knew vastly more about radiometric dating than we will ever know.)” God “knows much more than we do about earth history, and if we know Him and trust His Word we can benefit from the insights in Scripture.”

Thus, we as Adventists actually have an advantage over non-religious scientists because our worldview is broader and more open to dimensions that are closed for secular scientists. To respect the biblical creation account and the inspired insights of Ellen G. White on the issue of creation should motivate us to be even more careful in our scientific and theological work than perhaps a non-religious scientist might be because we accept the biblical record (and the insights of Ellen G. White) as inspired and thus as something intrinsically sacred.

To dismiss inspired statements made in Scripture and by Ellen G. White as irrelevant, outdated, or incompatible with our faith raises a number of important questions with serious consequences for the Adventist Church at large.

What is the role of the Bible for our faith and practice? Is the Bible indeed our final norm and ultimate authority, as we profess in our Fundamental Belief 1? Can we trust the Bible in statements that tell us about our salvation if those statements are dependent upon historical events (like the historicity of Adam at creation and Jesus Christ the second Adam in Romans 5:12) and those historical statements cannot be trusted?

What role does Ellen G. White and her writings play for Seventh-day Adventists? Can we still maintain that her writings are “a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction” and also “make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested” as Fundamental Belief 18 states? Are there degrees of divine inspiration?

Furthermore, can a God who uses an evolutionary process as His method of creation really be worshipped and adored as good and loving? Does a God who allows countless billions of organisms and life forms to suffer and die and even entire species to be wiped out possess...
the same values and the goodness with which He is constantly revealed in the Bible? Does the process of evolution, with its extraordinarily wasteful and cruel mechanisms, which are full of predation, selfishness, randomness, disaster, waste, struggle, suffering, and even the death of whole population groups, not pose a significant problem for the goodness and love of God? Aren’t the goodness and love of God fundamental to His nature and His struggle, suffering, and even the desire to save a world that is lost?

In what areas are the Bible and Ellen G. White authoritative for the Adventist Church? Only in matters of salvation and personal spirituality, or can we trust God’s Word and the writings of Ellen G. White also when they touch the complex issue of God’s supernatural creation, the Flood, biblical history, etc.?

Does the way we as Christian scientists and theologians do science and present science and theology erode or enrich our faith in God’s supernatural creation? How can we engage in science and theology and pass on our findings in such a way that it enriches our faith? These are some questions that deserve to be taken seriously, and the answers we give to them will have consequences far beyond the issue of creation vs. evolution. They will affect many other fundamental beliefs and ultimately our mission and growth.

“God has illuminated human intellects, and poured a flood of light on the world through discoveries in art and science. But those who view these from a merely human standpoint will most assuredly come to wrong conclusions.”

Ellen G. White

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BY MIGUEL LUNA *

HOW THE EARLY CHURCH ORGANIZED ITSELF

The Book of Acts and the Pauline Epistles provide important insights into early church organization.

There are a variety of forms of church organization in contemporary church denominations. How did these churches adopt their own models of church organization? Would it be possible to ascertain a model of church organization from the early church? More specifically, is it possible to understand the way early believers were organized as local and universal church?

In considering the structure of the church as it is mentioned in the New Testament, there is always a dangerous tendency to read back into apostolic times the issues and arguments of today’s literature. But the Book of Acts and the Pauline Epistles serve as sources for early church organization and the reasons behind that church structure. In addition, they reflect how it grew and organized despite persecution and a variety of cultural and philosophical influences.

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The Initial Stage of the Church

In calling the 12 disciples, Jesus Christ was beginning a new movement that would grow to become the Christian Church. “He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness” (Matt 10:1, NIV). It is important to note that from this small group of 12, Jesus inaugurated the basic unit of church organization and mission. “These twelve Jesus sent out” (vs. 5). The word apostle gives the same idea. From this beginning, the disciples were called by Jesus, and they were called to continue Jesus’ mission.

In asserting His declaration to the apostle Peter, Jesus Himself expressed His willingness to build His own church. “I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (Acts 16:18). From this statement, it is possible to grasp the intention of Jesus to have a church and to have apostles to continue with the proclamation of the kingdom of God and the multiplication of disciples.

The church, initiated by Jesus, would be a movement that would continue the mission of the One who is now “exalted to the right hand of God” (Acts 2:33). Jesus’ purpose for the formation of a community of believers was so clear that He even prayed for those who would be added to this early church nucleus. “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message” (John 17:20). Jesus prayed also for the unity of the community of those who will be united in one body, the church (vs. 21). So, in the last week of His ministry He prayed, “Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name . . . so that they may be one as we are one” (vs. 11).

Unity was for Jesus one of the most important aspects of the movement He was beginning. In synthesis, the New Testament church is considered to be an organic body founded upon Jesus Christ with individual members interdependent, yet each having full access to the church’s head, Jesus Christ.

The Great Commission

The Great Commission is found near the end of three gospels and in the first chapter of the Book of Acts. In Matthew 28:19, 20, Jesus instructed His disciples to make more disciples, baptize them, and teach them to obey everything He had taught them. Based on the centrality of Christ’s authority, the use of the term disciple in the Great Commission, and the practice of evangelism and church development in the Book of Acts, it is expected that God’s plan for carrying out this commission would focus on planting new groups of committed disciples.

*BY MIGUEL LUNA *
The Book of Acts reveals the way the first-century missionaries implemented the Great Commission. After the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, the church was established in Jerusalem (Acts 2). The gospel spread, and everywhere it went, churches were established. The Book of Acts records the establishment of local churches in Antioch of Syria, Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome. One significant example of church development is found in the establishment of the church in Antioch of Syria.

**The Antioch Church**

As a result of the work of those who were persecuted, “men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord” (vs. 20, 21). This was the beginning of the church of Antioch. Because of this development, the church in Jerusalem sent a disciple to observe and bring reports. Sending a representative suggests that they already had a system of church organization.

It also suggests that they were concerned not only about church organization but church growth. So “they sent Barnabas to Antioch” (vs. 22). As time passed, the church in Antioch became one of the centers for church development, since “a great number of people were brought to the Lord” (vs. 24). In order to continue nurture in Antioch, Barnabas brought Paul there. “For a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people” (vs. 26). It appears that Paul and Barnabas followed the Jewish pattern of the synagogue in organizing the Antioch church.

After one year of teaching, those who believed and regularly came to the meetings became disciples of Jesus Christ, and for this reason they were called “Christians” (Acts 11:26). They not only received a new name, but they also grew in such a way that Luke mentioned that after one year, the church was led by prophets and teachers (13:1), which indicates that church leaders were selected according to their spiritual qualifications and spiritual gifts. They even were concerned for the needs of the brothers living in Judea and provided help, “sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul” (11:30). Sending leaders and sharing gifts suggest that the church in Jerusalem and the church in Antioch were organized.

It is noteworthy that when Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch from their missionary trip, they reported to the local church that sent them. As Luke mentioned, “From Antioch they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles” (Acts 14:26, 27). Evidently making reports of missionary activity was the practice. They were accountable for their mission to the church and for sharing the news of their missionary trip with them.

**Paul’s Ministry to the Jewish Synagogues**

The early synagogues helped Jews maintain their identity while living in a foreign and pagan country. They became the center of Jewish social life, serving as school, meeting place, courtroom, and house of prayer. In some towns, synagogues may have even provided lodging for travelers. Synagogues were a place where small groups of Jewish students could read and discuss the Torah and oral tradition. Worship and study, friendship and community celebration, meetings and governing of the community were centered on the synagogue.

The natural place to witness to the gospel of Jesus was in the place where Paul and Barnabas were accustomed to study the Scriptures, the synagogue. The first place they visited on their mission trip to Cyprus was the local synagogue, where “they proclaimed the word of God” (Acts 13:5). “From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue. The first place they visited and where “they proclaimed the word of God” (Acts 13:5). “From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue.

"Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses.” (vss. 38, 39). Therefore, in their early
missionary ministry, the apostle Paul and his associates used the synagogue as a center for evangelism because they were accustomed to its structure.

After they reached the Jews, they also turned to the Gentiles because this was their mission. Although their ministry focused on the Gentiles, they followed the same method: First they visited the Jews in their synagogues, and then they turned to the Gentiles (Acts 14:1, 3). For instance, “At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue” (vs. 1). “As usual” suggests that they made the major approach in teaching the gospel visiting the Jewish synagogues. And as a result of Paul and Barnabas’ teachings, many new disciples were added to the church.

How did they organize? Again following the pattern of the Jewish synagogues, they appointed elders in each church (Acts 14:21-23). They were organized as a local church apart from the local synagogue. Thus the early church organization was gaining identity and using the synagogue as model for a local church organization.

So it also happened in Thessalonica: “As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. ‘This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ,’ he said” (Acts 17:2, 3). Throughout the Book of Acts, this was the method of sharing the gospel of Jesus. When they arrived in Berea, they also followed the same method. “On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue” (vs. 10).

Interestingly, they used the same approach in Athens. “He reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there” (vs. 17).

In Corinth, “[e]very Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks” (Acts 18:4). In Corinth there was a change of place after the Jews opposed Paul, so he “left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God” (vs. 7). This suggests, further, that the early church carried on many of its meeting at the houses of the believers.

In Ephesus, Paul “went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews” (Acts 18:19). And in his third missionary journey, the apostle Paul arrived in Ephesus again, and following his custom, he “entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God” (19:8).

Visiting the synagogues was their strategy for church mission and evangelism as well as a pattern for local church organization. In those places they visited, elders were appointed for teaching and nurturing the believers.

Appointment of Local Church Elders

The first reference to elders in the early church is found when the believers at Antioch sent a relief offering to the elders of Jerusalem “by the hands of Barnabas and Saul” (Acts 11:30, KJV). The designation of elders was certainly similar to the term used to name the leaders of the synagogue in Judaism, but different in nature.

The apostle Paul and his helpers appointed elders in the cities they visited (Acts 14:23). It seems that one of the main purposes for returning to the cities they had already evangelized was to appoint elders. “[T]hey returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. ‘We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,’ they said. Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust” (vs. 21-23). It seems that they followed the opinion and consent of the whole church in the process of selection.

It is important to note that when the apostle and his associates appointed elders, they used a particular leadership pattern from the Jewish synagogues. The actual leadership of the synagogues included the head of the synagogue, the minister, and the elders. According to the Book of Acts and the Pauline Epistles, they selected the term elders to designate the leaders of the local church. As the local church grew, they borrowed at least two categories for leadership: the elders and the ministers. The latter had a connection with the idea of service and ministry, as was the case of the church in Philippi.

It was the normal procedure for early church organization to appoint
Elders were religious leaders of the early church who governed the believers in local congregations and were responsible for leadership, pastoral care, teaching, and supervision. When discrepancies and doctrinal misunderstanding arose, local leaders gathered together with elders and apostles in Jerusalem to solve doctrinal questions.

The Council of Jerusalem

The church of Antioch was confronted with a doctrinal debate: the issue was regarding circumcision of those who came to the church from a Gentile origin. Should they be circumcised before coming to the Christian community? Some men who came from Judea taught that “unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1). In order to solve this issue, the church of Antioch appointed Paul and Barnabas, “along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question” (vs. 2). This is the first reference to a church council in which representatives from local churches were selected to discuss a doctrinal issue.

Thus, Paul and Barnabas were “welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them” (Acts 15:4). It seems that the apostles continued in a position of leadership as major overseers of the universal church and were willing to listen to reports on church development. Specifically, “The apostles and elders met to consider this question” (vs. 6). So at the Jerusalem Council it is possible to observe two levels of church organization: the first, the local churches who sent their elders as representatives; and the second, the universal church represented by the apostles, who were empowered to make a doctrinal statement.

In the council there was a desire to preserve the unity of the church. For this reason, the church of Antioch did not act independently, but decided to send representatives together with Paul and Barnabas to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem.

After they had a consensus, the apostles and elders, with the whole church, “decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, two men who were leaders among the brothers” (Acts 15:22). So the church in a council had the capacity to send representatives to local churches to teach a doctrinal statement and to clarify the issue of salvation. “The men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message. Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers” (vv. 30-32).

As a consequence of the decision of the local and universal church, they were strengthened in “faith and grew daily in numbers” (Acts 16:5). A very important doctrinal consensus was established under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They agreed, “We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are” (15:11). This was the beginning of a formal process by which the universal church discussed doctrinal questions.

Thus, through the Jerusalem Council, two levels of church organization were clearly visible. The
Looking at the church development and early church organization, there were two levels of church organization in Paul’s time. First, the local church elders appointed by the apostle Paul and his associates cared for the local needs of the recent community of believers. Second, the universal church leaders such as Paul and his associates functioned as overseers and universal church pastors who cared for the church at large, its nurture and health.

It is interesting to note that the apostle Paul and his associates functioned as major supervisors of the local churches in certain regions. In a certain way, these associates were universal overseers under the apostle’s guidance. For instance, from Ephesus, Paul “sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer” (Acts 19:22). Similarly, addressing the church at Thessalonica, the apostle wrote, “We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God’s fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith” (1 Thess. 3:2). And after the visitation, Timothy came back with a report to Paul: “Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love” (vs. 6).

Through the instructions that the apostle Paul gave to Timothy, some basic principles for the universal ministry may be understood. It was the apostle Paul who appointed Timothy at Lystra (Acts 16:1). Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him on his second missionary trip (vs. 3). Thus, Timothy traveled, sent by Paul, on some specific pastoral missions. For example, he sent Timothy to Thessalonica, Philippi, and Corinth with specific instructions and mission (1 Thess. 3:2; 3:6; Phil. 2:19; 1 Cor. 4:17). Therefore, it is evident that Timothy functioned as a shepherd in a broader category of church organization.

Is there evidence of how Timothy performed his universal ministry? The letters Paul wrote give us some clues toward understanding his ministry. First of all, he was assigned to correct false teachers (1 Tim. 1:3). He was also charged to instruct the members of local churches (4:6). How did he perform his ministry? He was invested with authority, being an example of teaching, preaching, faith, and purity (vs. 11-14). Timothy was also commissioned to prepare other believers to teach doctrine (2 Tim. 2:2).

Another important characteristic of the apostolic ministry was the fact that universal workers addressed churches in the introduction of the epistles. For example, Apollos and Paul were considered “fellow workers” (1 Cor. 3:9). “Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:1); “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother” (Col. 1:1); “Paul, Silas, and Timothy” (1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1). There is evidence that Paul had coworkers such as Priscilla and Aquila (Rom. 16:3), Timothy (Rom. 16:21), Titus (2 Cor. 8:23), Mark (Col. 4:10), and Luke (Philemon 24). All of them received teaching and instructions.
from the apostle Paul to conduct the work of teaching and witnessing from a universal perspective.

**A Unique Form of Church Organization**

It is important to ask why Paul and his associates chose the synagogue as a model for local church organization. As was mentioned, their strategy for mission and evangelism was to visit the Jewish synagogues and present the gospel that Jesus was the Messiah.

There was another model that the apostles could use for church organization on both local and universal levels. Paul was very well acquainted with the political system of the Roman Empire, and he declared himself to be a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37, 38). During his trial and judgment, he recognized clearly the instances of the judiciary and political system of the Roman Empire. He evidently avoided any hint of the hierarchical system of the sort used by the political structure of that time.

Paul was following more than tradition when structuring churches patterned after the synagogues. As a well-trained Pharisee, he understood the value and purpose of the synagogue. For him it was a house of prayer and a house of Scripture study. Besides, at the center of the synagogue teachings, festivals, and worship was the expectation of the coming of the Messiah.

The apostle Paul clearly stated that the church was “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord” (Eph. 2:20, 21). According to this metaphor, Jesus Christ is the principal foundation upon which the apostles and prophets, and finally, the whole church are laid.

Paul asserted that James, Cephas (Peter), and John were “reputed to be pillars” (Gal. 2:9) in the church at Jerusalem. It is important to note that in most cases, Peter was recognized as a primary apostle, but primarily in the sense of service (2 Peter 1:1). From its beginning, the church was strongly influenced by the preaching and teaching of Peter and John (Acts 3:1; 4:1, 13). They took the initiative to fulfill the responsibility given by Jesus, “teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead” (4:2). In those days most of the believers were Jews, and it was not difficult for them regularly to assemble for worship in the synagogues.

As the church grew, it became necessary to include others in the organization. In an initial step, “seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom” (Acts 6:3, NKJV) were elected to collaborate with the apostles. They functioned not only in the “daily distribution” but also, according to the Book of Acts, taught, preached, and baptized (8:4-40).

As a result of the preaching of the Word by the disciples, the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria grew quickly, creating the necessity for supervision by the apostles. For example, Peter traveled to encourage the believers in Lydia, Joppa, and Caesarea (Acts 9:32, 36; 10:1, 24).

A study of the Book of Acts and the Epistles shows that the apostle Peter worked primarily among the Jewish believers, and Paul among the...
The fact that they were semi-itinerant, Gentiles. Paul notes that he “had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been to the Jews” (Gal. 2:7). In this way, ethnic and regional missionary endeavors were also carried forward.

The church at Antioch became a center for the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentiles. There, Barnabas and Paul preached to great multitudes. At the direction of the Holy Spirit, Paul and Barnabas, as apostles, went to the Gentiles to share the gospel of salvation (Acts 13:46, 47). The fact that they were semi-itinerant apostles created the need for permanent supervision by local church leaders after the apostles left. Thus, in their journey, they appointed elders in each church (14:23), demonstrating to early believers a basic church organization for the continuation and preservation of the work of all local churches.

From this early church development, it may be implied that church organization functioned administratively at two levels: at a broader level by the apostles and at the local level by locally appointed and ordained elders. The church in its initial organization was led by the apostles, who acted by the influence of the Holy Spirit in appointing local elders who in turn instructed the believers in their local congregations.

The apostles were called upon to validate and enhance the work of the gospel in places away from Jerusalem, and so they made trips to several locations for this purpose (Acts 8:14; 9:26, 27, 32; 11:1). Soon, the gospel work began in Lydda, Joppa, and Caesarea, and a new center developed in Antioch. With the commissioning of Barnabas and Paul as the first Christian missionaries sent by the church, there was soon the beginning of a universal church. When a doctrinal problem tested the identity of the developing church, the Antioch church selected representatives who appealed to the apostles and elders of Jerusalem, whom they evidently believed were qualified to weigh evidence and render a decision (Acts 15:2, 6, 13-21, 22, 25, 28).

As the apostle Paul established churches throughout the Gentile world, his practice was to ordain elders and charge them with the responsibility of local leadership (Acts 14:23). Later, the apostle refers to a body of “bishops and deacons” who shared the leadership of the church in Philippi (Phil 1:1, NKJV). Near the end of his life, Paul charged young Titus as regional supervisor to appoint elders in the churches of Crete (Titus 1:5).

Contemporary Church Implications

A study of early church organization and practice may have some implications for a contemporary form of church organization:

Christ is the head of the church, and the Holy Spirit is His representative.

Christ desires the unity of His church in such a way that there will be distinguishable beliefs and practices reflecting the principles of His kingdom.

Church organization is needed because of church growth and for the accomplishment of church mission.

Early church organization followed the pattern of the Jewish synagogue with which the believers were familiar.

The local church is the basic unit of God’s church and possesses a local leadership, elders and deacons, responsible for nurturing and caring for the spiritual life of the believers.

Each local church also has responsibility to the total body of Christ, His Church.

There was recognized local and universal church organization. Local churches were led by the leadership of elders and deacons, and universal church by the itinerant apostles and evangelists, such as Paul and his associates.

There was a recognized universal church leadership in Jerusalem.

Doctrinal issues were discussed at the universal level of church organization, as was done at the Council of Jerusalem.

There were regional territorial assignments to facilitate church mission according to people’s backgrounds and cultures. They visited these provinces and organized churches in their cities.

The mission of the church is a continuation of Christ’s mission for saving the lost, and church organization was established to fulfill that mission; therefore, the church is a divine organism and a human institution. A church without mission is just another institution.

Despite different locations, ethnic origin, cultures, and traditions, the early church was united by a common gospel, mission, and form of church organization.

** Unless noted otherwise, all Scripture references in this article are quoted from the New International Version of the Bible.
shaped a region of the earth’s crust is the Missoula Flood.

On a field trip in 1922 near the Columbia River, between the U.S. states of Washington and Oregon, Professor J. Harlen Bretz, professor of geology at the University of Chicago, came across some depositional and erosional features quite unlike anything he had studied before. There appeared to be large dry river courses and giant ripple marks that seemed to speak of the presence of a large rushing body of water at some point in the past.

For the next decade he studied these features and published articles on them. His conclusions were met with strong opposition in the scientific community as they seemed to have a faintly biblical scent to them. At this point, Bretz could not account for where this flood water had come from that seemed to have created these geological features. This seemed to the scientists of the day to be allowing for a little too much of a divine foot in the naturalistic door. Even though the scientific research by Bretz was solid, it was rejected. However, Pardee’s work in 1947 on the drainage of the Glacial Lake Missoula provided a water source for the catastrophe that Bretz saw, and in 1965 an international party of geologists accepted his theory.

A most interesting erosional remnant of this flood as it relates to this article is Steamboat Rock. Steamboat Rock is a mesa 900 feet tall. It is all that is left after the glacial waters of the Missoula Flood came rushing through. The ice dam that contained Glacial Lake Missoula broke, and an estimated 500 cubic miles of water hurtled downstream. At its peak the
flood flowed about 80 mph. Some researchers suggest that it took only two or three days for the huge lake to drain, and in that period of time, it changed the landscape forever.

Millions of tons of material were removed during this local flood. Only the Cambrian granite of Steamboat Rock withstood the immense power of that water. Steamboat Rock stands as a testament to the overwhelming forming power of aquatic erosion. But what if Steamboat Rock points geomorphologically to a reality greater than itself? Perhaps other plateaus were formed in this way?

Table Mountain in South Africa's Cape Town region is one of the world's most famous and beautiful plateau mountains. It rises to an impressive 3,563 feet. At its base is Malmesbury group Precambrian granite and on top of this Ordovician sandstone was deposited. The standard explanation for the geomorphology of the area is that during the carboniferous age (280 million years ago) there was a uniform covering of sandstone over the whole cape peninsula. From that point until now, erosion, faulting, uplifting, and inclusions were responsible for what is now seen.

This explanation, however, leaves some questions to be answered. Why is the plateau of Table Mountain still almost perfectly flat after all these millennia? Why has most of the sandstone, which covered the whole peninsula, been eroded, leaving behind Table Mountain, which is composed of the same sandstone and is not capped by a harder stone? Then there is also the issue of the fluctuating sea levels around the mountain. It seems that at one point the whole range was under water, and seashells have been found in some numbers on Table Mountain.

All this raises the question: Is it possible that, just as the plateau called Steamboat Rock was formed by a regional flood, so the plateau called Table Mountain was carved out by an even larger flood event in a matter of days? Could this have happened while huge flood waters receded and carved through the newly deposited sediment to leave behind something similar to what we now see as Table Mountain? Admittedly, this is speculation, and there are many geologists who would object, but then again the conclusions by Bretz were also rejected at first.

This is by no means proof that the biblical flood is a scientific fact. As geological evidence for topography-shaping catastrophic events mount in different parts of the world, however, perhaps it is time not only to listen but to hear what the rocks are trying to say. Perhaps the striking table plateau in Cape Town, South Africa, is a mountain of evidence pointing to such a catastrophic aquatic event?

Thanks to Jonathan Burnett for further discoveries regarding this topic and for his assistance in the writing of this column.

REFERENCES
3 Ibid.
These days, many national and international news stories cry out for justice. The need for justice has been around for a long time.

There were unjust people way back in the days of the prophet Micah. Rather than admitting their wrong, they were trying to cover up for their mistreatment of others by making offerings to the Lord. That seemed like a profitable strategy. When you are making a killing, a donation doesn’t dent your bottom line. It’s cheap grace.

But Micah reminded: “He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?” (6:8, NIV).

Justice is fairness, treating other people as you would wish to be treated (Matt. 7:12). It is respecting boundaries between your rights and theirs. It protects us from ourselves and from each other. Justice is the law, but it is more than the law.

Signs that discourage shoplifters by saying: “It’s not only wrong, it’s illegal” have it backwards. They should read: “It’s not only illegal, it’s wrong.” Right and wrong are the basis on which justice is built.

As C. S. Lewis pointed out in Mere Christianity; our sense of right and wrong can come only from a wise Creator; it cannot come from mere mechanistic evolution. There is moral rightness in the principle that I am my brother’s keeper. No such rightness comes from the notion that the monkey in the zoo is his keeper’s brother.

What happens when justice is lacking? Greed and oppression take over. Big businesses become like reverse Robin Hoods, taking from the poor to give to the rich. There is lack of trust, which can create conflict on any level of human interaction.

Recently, in the Netherlands, I chatted with a notable business professor from the Free University of Amsterdam. He said that a lot of the current international financial crisis results from lack of trust among the world’s major international banks. History teaches us that between nations, injustice and lack of trust often result in wars.

We need social justice, which was a huge concern of the Hebrew prophets, including Micah. Early Adventists were strong advocates of social justice, especially with regard to the imperative of freeing the United States from the moral leprosy of slavery. Within the last century, however, Adventists have tended to avoid social justice issues. This may at least partly be due to our desire to separate church from state. If a social justice issue becomes a political issue, which it inevitably does, we don’t want to touch it because we don’t want to get into politics.

Like Jesus, we should stand up for what is morally and ethically right, according to God’s principles, and let political chips fall where they may. We must continue strongly to advocate separation of church and state. But that shouldn’t silence us from speaking out against discrimination and oppression. Christians should be leading in this, “the head and not the tail” (Deut. 28:13).

Obedience to God’s principles of justice, which protect us, is not legalism. Legalism is misuse of law, but following God’s law for its intended purpose is common sense.

As our best Friend, God guides and warns us. He knows what is best for us because He made us. His instructions are like the manufacturer’s manual that comes with your car. The manufacturer tells you to put oil in the crankcase, so that’s what you do. You don’t regard obedience to that direction as legalism or disregard it by putting in water instead.

My wife and I were backpacking in northern Israel in 1987. We decided to take a shortcut across a field. But there was a sign in Hebrew at the edge of the field, and we didn’t know the word. We looked up the word—mogshim—in our little dictionary, and it meant “land mines”! Was it legalistic to heed the warning? Did we give up being free—free to have a blast? That kind of freedom is downright expensive: It can cost an arm or a leg!

In Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28-30, God made it clear that the purpose of His commands and warnings is to protect His people and lavish His blessings on them. This is so that others will be drawn to Him. Evangelism through excellence! He can do this only if we follow His instructions, as Daniel did in the court of Babylon. If God blesses us when we ignore His wise counsel, He will send a mixed message to the world. If there is no difference between God’s people and those around them, God’s people fail to serve as channels of revelation for Him in the world.

God’s law is good for those who keep it (Lev. 18:5), but it cannot help those who break it. So His laws can
ever happens, “even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). That is the best assurance we can ever have. If we have Him, we have assurance of eternal life (1 John 5:12). We can have another opportunity to “do justly” because “He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1:9).

Politicians make campaign promises, are inaugurated, and then we see if they will deliver. God delivers on His promises before the inauguration. Our obedience is only a response to His grace, which has already saved us.

Of course, principles of justice can’t do their job unless there is accountability to them. To “do justly,” we need internal accountability, with the gift of God’s law of love written on our hearts (Jer. 31:33; Rom. 5:5), knowing that He provides the empowerment for obedience and is aware of everything we do.

The story is told of a minister who rose to address his congregation: “There is a man among us who has been flirting with another man’s wife. If he does not put five dollars in the offering plate, his name will be read from this pulpit.” When the offering money was counted, there were 19 five-dollar bills and a two-dollar bill with a note attached: “Other three pay day.” It’s amazing how forthcoming we are when we think that what we do has come to light!

Dennis Prager, a Jewish radio talk-show host in Los Angeles, has said that he doesn’t trust anyone who does not believe in God. His reason is that only a sense of accountability to God is powerful enough to restrain people adequately from hurting one another.

Nothing is hidden from God, the One who really matters. So the only sensible approach is to say with David: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Ps. 139:23, 24). To those who love and trust God, this is reassuring, not threatening.

Hannah Senesh was a young Hungarian-Jewish resistance fighter in World War II. She was captured by the Nazis, who interrogated her with torture and finally executed her by firing squad. Hannah had written a number of poems in modern Hebrew. The example on the next page dates from 1942.

We do have Someone to whom we can absolutely entrust everything, including all our deepest secrets, and He will never betray our trust. He understands and sympathizes because He has been tempted in all points as we have, yet without sinning (Heb. 4:15).

He has absolutely proven his love by dying for us. He is with us, whatever happens, “even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). That is the best assurance we can ever have. If we have Him, we have assurance of eternal life (1 John 5:12). We can have another opportunity to “do justly” because “He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1:9).

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1 Unless otherwise designated, all Scripture references in the article are quoted from the New King James Version of the Bible.
Each year on October 31, millions of people celebrate Halloween by dressing up as witches, devils, and demons. Besides parties for adults, the day has become an occasion for children to go from house to house, often in costumes, demanding “trick or treat.”

The name Halloween derives from the Roman Catholic holiday All Saints’ Day, The Feast of All Saints, or All Hallows’ Day (hallow means “to make holy” or “consider something sacred”), celebrated on November 1. All Saints’ Day commemorates the saints who have not been assigned a special day in the calendar of the Roman Catholic Church. The day before All Saints’ Day was called All Hallows’ Eve, from which Halloween is derived.

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, the origin of Halloween goes back to a festival of the Druids, an order of pagan priests in ancient Gaul and Britain, in pre-Christian times: “In ancient Britain and Ireland, the Celtic festival of Samhain was observed on October 31, at the end of summer. This date was also the eve of the new year in both Celtic and Anglo-Saxon times and was the occasion for one of the ancient fire festivals when huge bonfires were set on hilltops to frighten away evil spirits. The date was connected with the return of the herds from pasture, and laws and land tenures were renewed. The souls of the dead were supposed to revisit their homes on this day, and the autumnal festival acquired sinister significance, with ghosts, witches, hobgoblins, black cats, fairies, and demons of all kinds said to be roaming about. It was the time to placate the supernatural powers controlling the process of nature.

The Celtic festival of Samhain, which signaled the commencement of winter, consisted of the eve of the feast and the day itself (October 31 and November 1). It remained popular among the Celtic people even after the Christianization of Great
Britain in the fifth century. The Christian Church in Britain adapted the feast of Samhain by adding the Christian celebration of All Saints’ Day to the festival. Until the eighth century, the Feast of All Saints was celebrated on May 13. It seems that because the British custom to celebrate All Saints’ Day on November 1 had spread to other countries, Pope Gregory IV (827-844) transferred the feast of May 13 to November 1. The New Catholic Encyclopedia claims the reason was, “because provisions were inadequate for the numerous pilgrims coming to Rome in May,” but it acknowledges that some believe “the November feast originated in Gaul and was immediately adopted in Rome.”

The customs of Samhain survived in the Celtic areas of Great Britain: Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. In time they lost much of their religious significance and the eve of All Hallows’ Day became a secular festival, “although many traditionally Celtic ideas continued to be associated with the evening. Divination activities remained a popular practice. Adults, dressed in fantastic disguises and masks, imitated supernatural beings and visited homes where occupants would offer tributes of food and drink to them.”

Irish and Scottish immigrants introduced All Hallows’ Eve observances to America, and after the massive immigration of the Irish to the United States during the potato famine (1845-1852), Halloween became a national festival.

The custom for children to go trick or treating from door to door also goes back to the ancient Druid priests, who would go from house to house demanding food for their own consumption as well as for offerings to their deities. If the people in a home would not provide them with food, they would speak a demonic curse over the home, and, history claims, someone in the family would die within the year.

The Druids would carry with them a large turnip, which they had hollowed out on the inside and carved a face on the front, to represent the demonic spirit they depended upon for their power and knowledge. The turnip lighted by a candle from within was used as a lantern for the Druids as they went from house to house at night. When this practice came to America in the 18th and 19th centuries, turnips weren’t that prominent, and the pumpkin was soon substituted for the turnips.

Although the Seventh-day Adventist Church has not taken an official position specifically against Halloween, the church’s opposition to the occult and the demonic precludes any support for this type of festival.

Halloween and its customs have no roots in Scripture or in the Christian Church. They are firmly rooted in the occult and in pagan practices. These connections, however, are today forgotten or made light of. Nevertheless, any practice derived from the occult is incompatible with the teachings of Scripture (Lev. 20:6).

Since many people no longer believe in the existence of a personal devil and his demons, they feel there is no harm in making fun of these “religious relics of the past.” The children are taught that there are no such beings as witches and evil spirits and that it is fun to dress up as ghosts or goblins. The modern denial of the existence of Satan and demonic forces is clearly contrary to Scripture. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible affirms the existence of Satan and demonic spirit beings (Gen. 3:1; Job 1:6; Matt. 8:31; Rev. 12:9).

In the education of children, it is important that we do not plant false ideas in their minds. The Bible says, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it” (Prov 22:6, NKJV). To teach them that there is no harm in imitating evil spirits is contrary to God’s will.

God in the Old Testament warned Israel not to dabble in the occult. “There shall not be found among you . . . one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls upon the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord” (Deut. 18:10-12, NKJV). Since the occult is today more active than ever, this counsel is still valid today.

Participation in Halloween customs may seem innocent fun for children and adults, but it is one more way Satan can use to deceive people into thinking there is no harm in playing a little bit with the world of spirits and demons.

While Ellen White never mentioned Halloween, she warned many times against dabbling in spiritualism:

“There are many who shrink with horror from the thought of consulted spirit mediums, but who are attracted by more pleasing forms of spiritism.”

Seventh-day Adventists recognize that spiritualism has many faces. Some of them may seem harmless and even fun. Nevertheless, they lead children and adults away from God’s truth, and can become stepping stones to further entanglement with the occult.

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2 Ibid.