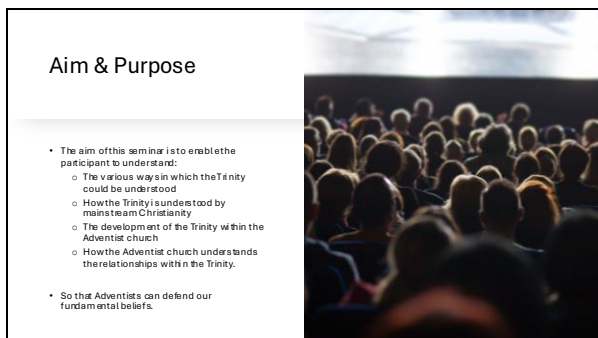


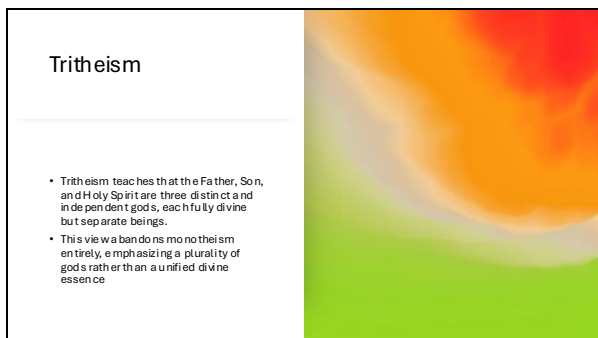
Adventist Understanding of the Trinity

By
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Aim & Purpose

- The aim of this seminar is to enable the participant to understand:
 - The various ways in which the Trinity could be understood
 - How the Trinity is understood by mainstream Christianity
 - The development of the Trinity within the Adventist church
 - How the Adventist church understands their relationships with the Trinity.
- So that Adventists can defend our fundamental beliefs.



Tritheism

- Tritheism teaches that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three distinct and independent gods, each fully divine but separate beings.
- This view abandons monotheism entirely, emphasizing a plurality of gods rather than a unified divine essence.

Tritheism Today

- In the 21st century, Mormonism (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) is the most prominent religious group associated with Trithestic tendencies.



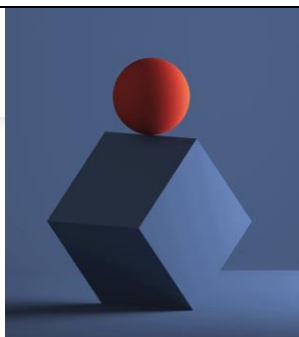
Modalism

- Modalism, also known as Sabellianism, teaches that God is a single person who manifests Himself in three different modes or roles—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—at different times.
- For example, God acts as the Father in creation, as the Son in redemption, and as the Holy Spirit in sanctification.
- These "modes" are not distinct persons but different expressions of one solitary being.



Modalism Today

- In the 21st century, Modalism is primarily associated with Oneness Pentecostalism, a movement that explicitly rejects the traditional doctrine of the Trinity.






Docetism

Docetism, an early Christian heresy, asserts that Jesus Christ did not have a real, physical body.


Instead, His human form was an illusion or a "phantasm," as physical matter was considered inherently evil within Gnostic dualism.

This belief denies the full humanity of Christ, claiming He only "seemed" to suffer, die, and rise again.



Docetism Today

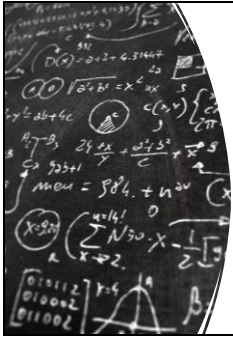
- In the 21st century, Docetism as a formal belief system does not have any major religious groups explicitly adhering to it. However, certain modern spiritual or religious movements exhibit ideas that resemble Docetism, particularly in their denial of Jesus' full humanity or physical incarnation.



Ebionitism

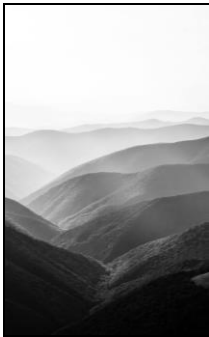
Ebionitism denies the divinity of Jesus Christ, viewing Him as a mere human being who was adopted by God at a specific point in His life (e.g., baptism or resurrection).

The Ebionites believed Jesus was a prophet and the Messiah because of His obedience to the Jewish Law, but not pre-existent or divine.



Ebionitism Today

- In the 21st century, there are no major religious groups that explicitly identify as "Ebionites" in the historical sense, but some modern groups and movements exhibit beliefs or practices that resemble Ebionitism.



Macedonianism

- Macedonianism, also known as Pneumatichianism, teaches that the Holy Spirit is not divine.
- Instead, it views the Spirit as a created being, subordinate to both the Father and the Son, and not co-equal or co-eternal with them.



Macedonianism Today


- There are no 21st-century religious groups that explicitly adhere to Macedonianism.



Adoptionism


- Adoptionism teaches that Jesus was not divine by nature but was a mere human being who was "adopted" by God at a specific point in His life (e.g., at His baptism, resurrection, or ascension).
- This view denies Jesus' pre-existence and eternal divinity.

Adoptionism Today



- In the 21st century, Adoptionism is not widely practiced or formally embraced by any major religious groups, but certain modern movements and theological perspectives exhibit beliefs or tendencies that resemble Adoptionism.

Partialism



- Partialism teaches that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each "parts" of God, meaning that none of them individually is fully God.
- Instead, they collectively make up the one God.
- For example, some interpretations suggest that each person is "one-third" of God, which is contrary to orthodox Trinitarian theology.

Partialism Today



- In the 21st century, Partialism, the Trinitarian heresy that teaches the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each "parts" of God rather than fully God individually, is not explicitly embraced by any major religious group.

Arianism



- Arianism teaches that Jesus Christ was created by God the Father and, therefore, is not co-eternal or of the same essence as the Father. Arius emphasized that "there was a time when the Son was not," making Jesus subordinate to the Father in both nature and existence.

Arianism Today



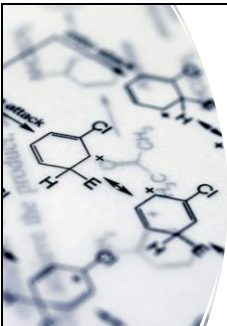
- In the 21st century, Arianism, the belief that Jesus Christ is a created being and not co-eternal or co-equal with God the Father, is not formally embraced by mainstream Christian denominations but persists in several religious groups.

Constantinopolitan Creed 381 AD

- And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds (aeons), Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, **consubstantial** with the Father

Constantinopolitan Creed 381 AD

- And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, **who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified**, who spoke by the prophets.



Consubstantial (wikipedia)

- Consubstantiality, a term derived from Latin: consubstantialitas, denotes identity of substance or essence in spite of difference in aspect.



James White & Joseph Bates

- Two of the principal founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Joseph Bates and James White, were originally members of the Christian Connection Church which rejected the doctrine of the Trinity.




J. N. Andrews & Uriah Smith

- In an article concerning the identity of Melchizedek in Hebrews 7:3, Andrews argued that the words "having neither beginning of days" cannot be taken literally since every being in the universe except God the Father has a beginning.




Early Adventist Pioneers

- Our pioneers clearly held Arian or Semi-Arian views in regard to the person of Christ.



Ellen G. White


- During the early decades of our church Ellen White made statements which could be interpreted as anti-Trinitarian.



Ellen G. White


In the book Patriarchs and Prophets (1890) she wrote, "He [Satan] was beloved and revered by the heavenly host, angels delighted to execute his commands, and he was clothed with wisdom and glory above them."

Yet the Son of God was exalted above him, as one in power and authority with the Father."




Interpretation

- As is the case with ambiguous texts in Scripture, we need to clarify ambiguous passages in Ellen White with clear statements on the topic.




The Breakthrough

- The breakthrough came with the publication of Ellen White's article "Christ the Life-giver" in Signs of the Times in 1897, and the book The Desire of Ages in 1898.



Statement of Fundamental Beliefs 1931

- In 1930 church administrators in Africa requested that the General Conference include a statement in the Yearbook of what Seventh-day Adventists believe. "Such a statement," they said, "would help government officials and others to a better understanding of our work."



Statement of Fundamental Beliefs 1980

- Prior to the 1980 General Conference in Dallas, a proposed statement of 27 Fundamental Beliefs was sent to the world divisions.
- At the conference itself a revised version, incorporating the many suggestions from the world field, was discussed and eventually voted as an expression of the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.



Current Adventist Statements: Trinity

- There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three coeternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. God, who is love, is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation


Current Adventist Statements: Son

- God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly human, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. By His miracles He manifested God's power and was attested as God's promised Messiah. . .



Current Adventist Statements: Holy Spirit

- God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in Creation, incarnation, and redemption. He is as much a person as are the Father and the Son. He inspired the writers of Scripture



A Summery Statement


The early Adventist pioneers were anti-Trinitarians.

In the late 1890s Ellen White published articles and books in which she made strong statements supporting the Trinity concept, although she never used the word "Trinity."




Economy of Function

- Within the Godhead an economy of function exists. God does not unnecessarily duplicate work. Order is the first law of heaven, and God works in orderly ways.



Divinity of Jesus

- Jesus Christ is Truly God. What is the evidence that Jesus Christ is divine? How did He perceive Himself? Did people recognize His divinity?




Divinity of Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit Is Truly God.

Scripture views the Holy Spirit as God. Peter told Ananias that, in lying to the Holy Spirit, He had lied not "to men but to God" (Acts 5:3, 4).

Resources:

- Judaism: <https://youtu.be/GxftCFINNfE?si=G42h-zjyiF1ZlcWG>
- Islam (1): <https://youtu.be/83YX5-xToWU?si=Y671x4f8nVqtna-->
- Islam (2): <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/ux5OHR27pCk>
- Islam (3): https://www.youtube.com/shorts/_lyXXU2aBxA



Questions & Answers Time
