Title: The inherited deity of Christ: a critical analysis of the Christology suggested by Adrian Ebens

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Abstract:

This study endeavors to systematically analyze the Christology suggested by Adrian Ebens. As such, it seeks to find out whether or not Ebens’ Christology of the inherited deity of Christ, built around the concept of the literal sonship of Christ is theologically credible. In an effort to achieve this objective, this work first delves into a historical survey of divergent views on the deity of Christ prevalent within Christendom from the early periods of church history leading up to the present. After this the key determinants that have come to shape Ebens’ Christology were delineated, systematized, and evaluated. Finally, the research focused on the task of theologically analyzing the key tenets of his Christology and thereupon drew conclusions from the findings of this study.

Chapters 1 and 2 set the stage for the study. The first chapter presented the problem that there is an incompatible difference between the Christology suggested by Adrian Ebens and that which is held by mainstream Seventh-day Adventist Church. As such, the study aimed at theologically analyzing the key determinants and tenets of Ebens’ Christology. This quest commenced by painting the historical backdrop for the study in the second chapter through a
presentation of anti-Trinitarian christological trends within the Christian Church through the centuries.

Chapter 3 delineated and defined the key determinants and tenets of Ebens’ Christology. The study identified and classified these determinants under three subcategories: hermeneutical determinant, historical determinant, and theological and philosophical determinants. Some determining principles under the theological and philosophical category include Ebens’ concepts of the absolute transcendence of God, distinctiveness of divine personalities, the great controversy, priority of relationships and Trinitarian delusions. The chapter also delineated and defined the key tenets of his Christology such as his concepts of the sonship identity of Christ, the origin and pre-existence of Christ, the inherited deity of Christ, the subordinate deity of Christ, and the venerability of Christ.

Chapters 4 and 5 analyzed the key determinants and tenets of Ebens’ Christology respectively. The findings that emerged out of such an analysis and presented in Chapter 6 of this study suggest that Ebens’ Christology, based on a literal understanding of the sonship of Christ seems to be nothing more than an improved Arian position. Although his Christology seems to have the merit of salvaging Christ from a creaturely status, it does not go beyond assigning Christ a secondary status to that of the Father. And because such a position cannot be theologically sustained, it was concluded that Ebens’ Christology of the inherited deity of Christ is largely suspect and therefore, untenable.