



GLOBAL IMPACT MINISTRIES

A Defense of the Apostolic
Christian Faith

Response to Oneness Pentecostalism Debunked, Pastor Steven Anderson, Part 1



Like most Trinitarians, Pastor Steve Anderson has a convoluted understanding about Oneness Pentecostal theology in that he believes we are saying that Jesus is God with us as God the Father rather than God the Father with us as a genuine human being.

Prominent Oneness Pentecostal author David Bernard wrote in his article entitled, "The Mediator Between God and Men, 'God Himself came into this world AS A HUMAN BEING.'"

Dr David Bernard did not say that God the Father came into this world as God the Father. He clearly stated that God the Father came into this world "as a human being." Hence, God Himself also became a distinct human being in the incarnation through the virgin rather than God coming into this world as God the Father. Thus, Oneness theologians teach that there is an ontological distinction between God the Father as God the Father outside of the incarnation and God the Father manifested in the flesh as a distinct human being. This is precisely what we would expect if we are to believe that God Himself also became a man while retaining His immutable attributes in the heavens.

Jesus clearly stated that he had become a distinct human being by being granted a "life in himself." "As the Father has LIFE IN HIMSELF so He has GRANTED THE SON LIFE IN HIMSELF."

Here we can see that when God was manifested in the flesh to become a human son, the human son was "granted" a distinct "life in himself" "as a human being."

I'm not aware of any Oneness believers using Pastor Steve Anderson's illustration of a person wearing three different hats to illustrate Oneness theology. While many Oneness believers endeavour to illustrate the Oneness of God by using the father, husband, pastor illustration that Pastor Anderson gave, most knowledgeable Oneness theologians know that a human person fulfilling three distinct roles does not adequately explain the incarnation because God Himself becoming a man is not the exact same thing as a person fulfilling the roles of a father, a husband, and a pastor.

After sharing an illustration that many Oneness believers use to illustrate the Oneness of the Godhead, Pastor Anderson then shares some illustrations that many Trinitarians use to illustrate a Trinity. Then Pastor Anderson admits that no illustration can adequately explain the Trinity. In like manner, knowledgeable Oneness theologians know that no earthly illustration can adequately explain the incarnation of One God the Father also becoming one man as a true human son. Therefore, knowledgeable Oneness believers can use the same argument that Pastor Anderson uses to point out the fact that the examples Trinitarians use to illustrate an alleged Trinitarian Godhead do not line up with scripture. Examples: A human having a spirit, soul, and body / Water, Vapour, and Ice / An egg having three parts.

There are two scriptural reasons why God's word (*the Greek word for "word" is "logos" in John 1:1 which literally means God's own expressed thoughts*) can be said to be with God and even called God. The first is the scriptural fact that God possesses His own logos as an attribute of Himself. 1 John 1:5 says that "God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all." Here we find that one of the attributes of God is "light" which belongs or pertains to God's essential Being. Since God's essential Being is composed of "light", the scriptures can say that "God is light." The same is true in 1 John 4:8 which says that "God is love." Since love is a part of God's essential Being, God's attribute of love belongs to Himself the same way that God possesses His own word/logos which is His ability to think and speak for Himself (*Matthew 5:37 (HCSB) "Let your word [logos] yes be yes and your no be no"; Matthew 12:37, "For by your words [logos] you will be justified and by your words [logos] you will be condemned."*).

Daniel 2:22 "...the LIGHT DWELLS WITH HIM (God)."

Job 12:13 "WITH GOD is wisdom and strength, counsel and understanding BELONGS TO HIM."

Here we can see that the attributes of God can be said to be 'with God' without having to be other God Persons beside Himself. If the words "with God" or "with Him (God)" show more than one God Person then we should also say that God's light, wisdom, strength, counsel, and understanding are five other God Persons beside Himself. Thus we would have a God the Light Person, a God the Wisdom Person, a God the Strength Person, a God the Counsel Person, and a God the Understanding Person beside God the Father. Hence, it is obvious that God's attributes such as His light, wisdom, strength, counsel, and understanding can be said to be "with God" while also belonging to Himself.

The second reason why God's logos can be said to be with God and even called God is due to the fact that Jesus is sometimes referred to as the logos (word) of God the Father Himself (*John 1:14 "the word [logos] was made flesh"; Rev. 19:13 "...his name shall be called the word [logos] OF God"*).

In the early third century, Origen identified the Christian majority as the Oneness Modalists who identified the Son of God as “the utterance of the Father.”

“The general run of Christians... proceed differently and ask, what is the Son of God when called the word (logos)... They imagine the Son to be THE UTTERANCE OF THE FATHER deposited, as it were in words...” (*Origen’s Commentary of the gospel of John, book 1:23*)

According to the majority of the earliest Christians, the Son of God was called the word (logos) of God as “the utterance of the Father” spoken in words before “the word” of God the Father” was later “made flesh” as a living Son of God (*Heb. 1:5; 2 Samuel 7:14; Jer. 23:5-6; Psalm 2:8; John 5:26*).

Christ Jesus as a human Son was in the beginning with God within God the Father’s own expressed thoughts (logos) before the world was actually created just like Ephesians 1:4 says that we were “chosen in him (Christ) before the foundation of the world.” In like manner, 2 Timothy 1:9 says that God’s “purpose and grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages” began and that we were born within God’s mind and planning after “the firstborn” [Jesus Christ] “before the world was” (*Romans 8:29, “...the firstborn among many brethren”; John 17:5*) literally created. For “purpose and grace” to be “given” to God’s elect before the human ages began is essentially the same thing as the man Christ Jesus being with the Father to be “given” “glory” “before the world was” created (*John 17:5; John 17:22, 24; Rom. 8:30, “And those whom He predestined He also called...justified... and glorified”*).

From 5:32 to 6:03 into his video, Pastor Anderson says nothing that Oneness theology does not affirm. As soon as the virgin conception took place, a real human life “was granted” to the Son “in himself” which was distinct from the divine life of God the Father (*John 5:26, “As the Father has LIFE IN HIMSELF, so also has he GRANTED the Son LIFE IN HIMSELF”*). Hence, the man Christ Jesus could be seen as “God manifested in the flesh” who became a fully complete human being (*Heb. 2:17*) rather than another true God Person beside our only true God the Father (*John 17:3*). In contradistinction to Oneness theology, the Trinitarian idea of a timeless God the Son could not be correct in light of the Son being “granted” a distinct human “life in himself.” For “as the Father has (*His Divine*) life in Himself, so He (*the Father*) has granted the Son life in himself (*a human life*).” An alleged timeless God the Son could not have always timeless existed as a Son while being “granted life in himself.” Wherefore, the only explanation that brings harmony to all of the scriptural data, while maintaining the divinity of Christ, is Oneness theology.

Earlier in his lecture (from 2:20 to 3:23), Pastor Anderson had cited some of the many examples that Trinitarians use to explain a Trinity while admitting that “no illustration can adequately explain the Trinity.” Pastor Anderson used two false illustrations that Oneness believers generally do not use (“3 hats” and “3 masks”) and then he combined them with some illustrations that Oneness believers do use to explain the Oneness of God. Then Pastor Anderson points to the scriptural distinctions between the Father and Son and then pretends like Oneness Pentecostals deny these ontological distinctions between God as God (the Father) and Immanuel God with us as a man (the Son). Since Steve Anderson had said that “no illustration can adequately explain the Trinity”, his attack on the use of some illustrations that Oneness believers sometimes use to explain Oneness has no merit. For by mocking Oneness illustrations to describe Oneness, Pastor Anderson condemns Trinitarian illustrations which attempt to explain a Trinity of three persons.

I could just as easily mock the Trinitarian idea of a human spirit, soul, and body allegedly being three God Persons because everyone knows that a human being is only one person while possessing a spirit, a soul, and a physical body. In like manner, three parts of one egg and three aspects of H₂O (water, vapour, and ice) do not show three persons. Oneness believers have often used the same illustrations that Trinitarians use to explain three manifestations of One true God because none of the examples utilized by Trinitarians can demonstrate three coequally distinct persons of an alleged Trinity.

I no longer use the illustration of a father also having the titles of other positions such as a husband or a pastor to explain Oneness because “no illustration can adequately explain” the incarnation when “God Himself came into this world as a human being.” Interestingly, I have often used some of the same illustration that some Trinitarians use to explain God manifesting Himself as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit like liquid water, water vapour, and ice to explain the Oneness of God. I have also used the human spirit, soul, and body illustration to explain Oneness because just as a human being can have three aspects to his being, so can God have plurality of aspects of Himself while remaining One Divine Person. Yet I have always understood that these illustrations always fall short of understanding God’s new human mode of existence as an ontological human being via virgin conception.

Pastor Anderson points to the ontological distinctions between God as God the Father and Immanuel God with us as a distinct human being and then uses these scriptures to attack Oneness theology. Pastor Anderson pretends like Oneness theology affirms that the Son of God is God the Father with us as God the Father without any ontological distinction between the Father and Son. Nothing could be further from the truth. The scriptures Mr Anderson cited actually support Oneness theology while exposing Trinitarian theology. Since no scripture supports the idea that God as God has more than one Divine Will, the distinctions between the Divine Will of God the Father and the human will of the Son of God only proves that God also became a distinct human being with an ontological human “life in himself” (*John 5:26*) which was “granted” in time.

The many scriptures showing the human will of the Son having the capacity to have a different will from God’s will actually destroys Trinitarian theology. For how can God as God have the capacity to have different wills as 3 God Wills and 3 God Minds without espousing Tri-theism? If 3 God wills could disagree among themselves then there would be chaos and disorder in heaven and in the physical Universe. Such a view is contrary to the words of inspired scripture and at odds with the testimony of the apostles and prophets. I challenge all Trinitarian apologists, including James White, to cite a single scripture to prove that God as God (not as a post incarnational Son) has more than one divine will, more than one divine mind, or more than one divine consciousness!

Pastor Steve Anderson alleges that there is a chain of command within the Deity of God Himself in which an alleged coequal Almighty God the Son has to submit to the Almighty will of God as his Father. The Trinitarian view could not be from God because God is not the author of confusion (*1 Cor. 14:33*). For the scriptures teach that God as God is the only true God the Father (*John 17:3*) who later “was manifested in the flesh” (*1 Tim. 3:16*) to become “fully human in every way” (*Heb. 2:17 NIV*). Again, I challenge all Trinitarian apologists, including James White, to cite a single verse to show that God as God (before the incarnation) ever had more than one Divine Will, more than one Divine Mind, or more than one Divine Consciousness! The only scriptural distinctions we find is the Divine Will being distinct from the human will only after God had become a man as a distinct human Son (*Heb. 1:5; 2 Samuel 7:14*).

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