



Charisma and Routinisation in a Millennialist Community: Seventh-day Adventist Identity

Richard Bowen Ferret

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This work examines the nature of Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) identity with particular reference to Ellen G. White, the movement's co-founder and prophet. Unlike most literature which limits investigation of SDA identity to a theological perspective, this study analyzes the movement's socio-historical and cultural contexts. With regard to the content of this book, chapter one introduces identity issues that have evolved as Adventism has developed from a small sectarian movement to a global church today. Chapter two examines the context from which the SDA movement arose in the USA including a discussion of characteristics drawn from the historical milieu out of which Ellen White's charisma originated. Chapter three examines the essential contributing factors underpinning the bestowal of legitimacy on Ellen White, while chapter four assesses the establishment of Adventist identity during its formative years. In chapter five, routinisation of charisma in early Adventist experience is analyzed, followed by a discussion in chapter six, of the continuing tensions between notions of imminence and delay which are a source of constant preoccupation within Adventist experience. Chapters seven and eight describe a number of controversies throughout SDA history which illustrate the ongoing identity issues within the movement, while chapter nine focuses on institutional dilemmas resulting from charismatic routinisation. A summary of the research is the focus of the concluding chapter including some suggestions requiring further ecclesial self-examination and reflection.

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