



The Juvenilization of American Christianity

Thomas Bergler

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Pop worship music. Falling in love with Jesus. Mission trips. Wearing jeans and T-shirts to church. Spiritual searching and church hopping. Faith-based political activism. Seeker-sensitive outreach. These now-commonplace elements of American church life all began as innovative ways to reach young people, yet they have gradually become accepted as important parts of a spiritual ideal for all ages. What on earth has happened?

In *The Juvenilization of American Christianity* Thomas Bergler traces the way in which, over seventy-five years, youth ministries have breathed new vitality into four major American church traditions -- African American, Evangelical, Mainline Protestant, and Roman Catholic. Bergler shows too how this "juvenilization" of churches has led to widespread spiritual immaturity, consumerism, and self-centeredness, popularizing a feel-good faith with neither intergenerational community nor theological literacy. Bergler's critique further offers constructive suggestions for taming juvenilization.

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