

Boekbesprekings / Book Reviews

Anderson, D W, Hill, P G & Martinson, R D 2006 – *Coming of age: Exploring the identity and spirituality of younger men*

Publisher: Augsburg Fortress. Pages: 213. Price: Unknown

Reviewer: Dr W J Smith (Benoni)

Coming of age (214 pages) is an impressive publication from the pen of three authors who have a sound knowledge of children, youth and family ministry. It is highly recommended to assist pastors and ministry leaders in their efforts to understand and help young men in their relationship with Jesus Christ. *Coming of age* is of high academic value and shows a solid theological understanding of the Word of God, but it is still a creative, engaging and interesting work for every reader.

The authors took a daring journey into the lives of younger men and departed from the point of view that in the work and life of many congregations, pastors and youth workers often fail to recognize their needs and to minister to them. They begin the journey by asking: "Where have all the young men gone?" (p 7) and then offer to reach out to this select group. They undertook an intensive journey through the life and whereabouts of the Christian community and looked at its shortcomings as far as these young men are concerned. At the same time, they present new challenges, suggestions and ideas for change in non-traditional ways. Their work emphasizes that congregations and Christian communities should address the need to develop ministries for younger men.

Coming of age provides a guide to pastors, youth leaders, educators and congregation leaders to renew men's ministries and to transform the Christian church that has become feminized. This is, however, not a critique of the place women have taken up in Christian communities. The authors want to make room for those who have become marginalized and who find themselves on the outside of Christian communities. Christian communities should embrace this opportunity to change, renew and increase their commitment to be a transforming community, in which equality between men and women is a daily way of living *coram Deo*.

The authors offer a new baseline from which Christian communities can disciple young men to once again explore their identity and spirituality in the face of God. If you too want to know where all the young men of your congregation have gone, then this book is for you. In reply to this question, the authors themselves offer the following remark: "Working with this question that gave birth to this project would be a contribution to the church as it readies itself for ministry in the twenty-first-century. The young men that we met have led us to believe this is so" (p 200).

