

The Spiritual Formation Movement: Impetus, ‘Dangers’ and ‘Blind Spots’?

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Abstract

Living authentic Christ-centred lives as taught and practiced by Jesus and his apostles, remains a core imperative for all Christians. Yet, evidence is mounting that spiritual standards amongst Christians are very low (Barna2006). The Spiritual Formation Movement (SFM) emphasises genuine transformation, life-long spiritual growth, and the intentional adoption of practises that give space and time for growing in Christlikeness. As such, it is considered by its advocates to be an antidote to a growing spiritual malaise.

While the SFM has grown in influence within evangelical circles, it remains controversial. This paper seeks to express something of influence and controversy of the movement by firstly, describing the essence of Spiritual Formation (SF). The impetus for the movement is also outlined as are some of the criticisms against it. The conclusion reached is that the harsher criticisms against the SFM are exaggerated, and that the few ‘blind spots’ that can be perceived, hardly mar the contribution that the movement has and could make to the Church as a whole.