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The Efficacy of Late Antique Spiritual Practices for Family-Based Adolescent Faith Formation

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[Kevin M. Young, George Fox University](#)

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Phil Newell

Second Advisor

Lars Rood

Abstract

Approximately 70 percent of evangelical teenagers drop out of church and stop practicing their faith during the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Research indicates that cultural trends are less to blame for these negative trends than the utilization of ineffective methodologies for faith formation. This dissertation argues that the utilization of modern learning techniques in conjunction with adapted spiritual formation practices from Late Antiquity, within the context of family, and coordinated by a church community best ensures a stable and enduring faith for the next generation. Section 1 addresses the problems inherent to adolescent faith formation within the context of family and church spheres. Section 2 reviews alternate approaches to adolescent faith formation. Section 3 proposes a solution based on: (1) the art and science of learning—recent research into the science of cognition and learning that challenges entrenched educational theories and systems; (2) the leveraging of Family Systems Theory in support of spiritually beneficial adolescent outcomes; (3) a better understanding of the unique wiring of the next generation as represented by Generation Z; (4) the benefit of applying E.P.I.C. teaching practices for adolescent formation; and (4) the efficacy of Late Antique Christian practices for spiritual formation, especially as adapted for utilization within the context of the family unit. Sections 4 and 5 outline the specifications for a non-fiction book that will challenge parents to take ownership of their children's spiritual formation, educating them in the efficacy of ancient methodologies for spiritual formation, and then equipping them to effectively adapt ancient practices within their own family context. Section 6 reflects on potential further research. Section 7 is the Artifact itself.

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