



Christian Fasting: A Theological Approach

Kent D. Berghuis

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This published dissertation develops an integrative theology of fasting from an evangelical Christian perspective. The progress of revelation is seen as centering on the work of Jesus Christ in a canonical theology. Two chapters have been devoted to studying the references to fasting in scripture, one each on the Old and New Testaments. This reflection is also done in conversation with the Christian community, both in its historical trajectories as well as contemporary forms. A chapter has been devoted to the extensive discussion of fasting in the patristic era, as well as another chapter that traces the history of fasting practices through monasticism, the Reformation, and into their decline in the modern era. In the fifth chapter of the body of the dissertation, the contemporary reawakening to fasting in Catholic, Orthodox, and evangelical traditions is examined. The integrating eschatological motif of the nature of the age that is seen emerging from the larger study of fasting is then stated in a christocentric fashion within the context of the story of God's redemption. This synthetic theology is applied in the cultural context of evangelical Christianity in the beginning of the twenty-first century. Christian fasting must ultimately be centered on Christ, reflect proper ways of engaging the human body in sanctification, and remember the corporate nature of the believer's community. It is hoped that this thesis will set fasting in an appropriate, positive theological context, so that its biblical and Christian heritage might be expressed in renewed spiritual expressions.

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