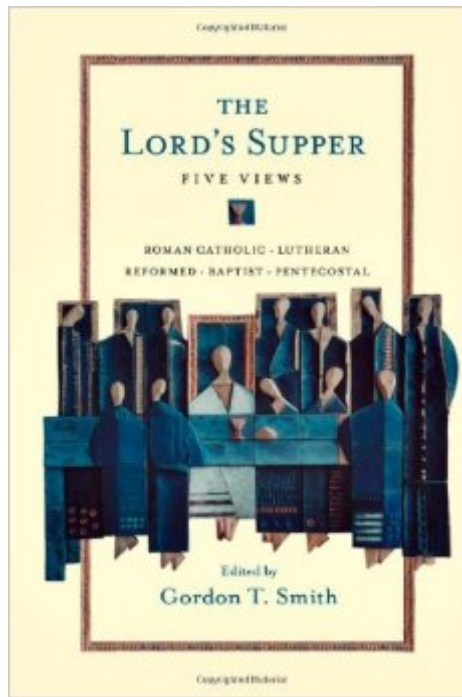


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The Lord's Supper: Five Views



Synopsis

Lord's Supper. Eucharist. Communion. Sacrament. Ordinance. While it's the meal that should unite us as followers of Christ, it sometimes appears we can't even agree on what to call it, let alone how we might share a common theological view of its significance. Even if we cannot reach full agreement, how can we better understand one another and this central observance of the Christian faith? Gordon Smith has invited five representatives of differing views within Christian tradition. Each holds his or her views with conviction and makes the case for that tradition. Each responds to the other views with charity, highlighting significant areas of agreement and disagreement. The views and contributors include The Roman Catholic View--Brother Jeffrey Gros, F.S.C., Professor of Church History, Memphis Theological Seminary, Memphis, TennesseeThe Lutheran View--John R. Stephenson, Professor of Historical Theology, Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, St. Catharines, OntarioThe Reformed View--Leanne Van Dyk, Academic Dean and Professor of Reformed Theology, Western Theological Seminary, Holland, MichiganThe Baptist View--Roger E. Olson, Professor of Theology, George W. Truett Theological Seminary, Waco, TexasThe Pentecostal View--Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Professor of Systematic Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California Here's a book that offers more light than heat on an important topic.

Book Information

Paperback: 159 pages

Publisher: IVP Academic (August 28, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0830828842

ISBN-13: 978-0830828845

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.5 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.2 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (9 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #957,756 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #156 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Theology > Ecumenism](#) #326 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Worship & Devotion > Sacraments](#) #651 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Churches & Church Leadership > Ecclesiology](#)

Customer Reviews

A couple of years ago, I did an indepth study of Luther and Zwingli's debate on the Lord's Supper in Marburg in 1529. Since then, I have been fascinated by the differing opinions among Christians as

to what takes place at the Lord's Table. Not surprisingly, I was highly interested in a book that Zondervan released in 2007 - a volume in their Counterpoints Series - that lays out four views of the Lord's Supper. This year, InterVarsity Press has released a similar volume that includes five views instead of four (Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, Baptist, and Pentecostal). In both of these books, the representative of each view lays out the rationale and history of their respective position and then the other contributors respond with their own questions and comments. Regarding the addition of the fifth view (Pentecostal), the new book from IVP is a step up from the Zondervan release. But if you are looking for stronger debate and for contributors who make their case from Scripture instead of history, the Zondervan book is better. The Lord's Supper: Five Views contains a wealth of important information, especially in regards to the history of each position. But this historical research frustrated me at times. I found the Roman Catholic apologist, Jeffrey Gros, to be much too conciliatory. His chapter is less a statement on the RCC view and more of a history of ecumenical relations. The Lutheran is the most passionate of all the writers. He tries to land knock-out blows to the other positions in his defense of Luther's view. Of course, as a Baptist, I remain unconvinced. But he at least kept me interested in his arguments.

Kudos to InterVarsity Press for continuing to pursue the market on multiple-views books even though it has become completely saturated and they (unlike Zondervan) do not have a specific series devoted to the publishing 'genre.' As I make this tongue-in-cheek comment I am again reminded why these books, while not without purpose or usefulness, have become rather dull in some of their effectiveness: it seems that we have developed an art form for writing and publishing in this style, tweaked it around what looks good to the average person and formatted it around what will sell in the marketplace. This is perhaps why the last few of these types of books have been boring to navigate and slow to excite. These books seem to have three basic types of essays: 1) the dogmatic assertion that this view is the only way to possibly understand the issue, with interaction towards the other writers which comes in slightly above name-calling; 2) the position which figures this is but one way to take this issue and the others are adding valuable insights to the discussion, there is nothing negative at all in their responses; 3) the middle-road of offering what seems to be good and then giving broad strokes as to why the other positions just to cut the mustard - never inspiring, always inviting. This short treatment on the Lord's Supper (a brisk 143 pages) is no exception. Five views are presented, and while the particular five could have perhaps been spread out a bit more there are a couple of perspectives that will certainly raise the interest of many (e.g. The Roman Catholic View and The Pentecostal View).

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