

The Law and the Lord's Supper

Since the law and gospel are so central to Lutheran theology, it should have been expected that their relationship to one another and their function in Christian life would eventually disrupt The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). While the dust from the 1970s has settled down on our side of the fence, this is still a live issue in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) which has not resolved the question of whether certain persons, because of different orientations, may be kept out of the ministry. The “gospel argument” as it started out in the LCMS is that biblical strictures were limited to Old and New Testament times and are not applicable today. Scott R. Murray's *Law, Life, and the Living God*, which lays out historical and theological issues on the third use of the law among twentieth-century American Lutheranism, was at the center of a past symposium. Murray puts his oar in the water again in the lead article of this issue.

The remaining articles address the Lord's Supper, each coming from a different angle. Peter J. Scaer finds in the miraculous feedings in Mark's Gospel allusions to the Lord's Supper as not only a well-ordered sacred banquet but also an occasion for discourse. With recent Lutheran rapprochements with the Episcopal Church in America and the Church of England, Lutherans remained haunted by how close their Reformation era forebearers were in the doctrine of the Lord's Supper during the Reformation era. Answering part of this question is Korey D. Maas's article on Robert Barnes. Who may be admitted to the Lord's Supper is a perennial issue in the LCMS. Joel D. Biermann, from our sister seminary, presents familiar arguments in a fresh manner in “Step Up to the Altar.” The April 2008 visit of the pope to our country keeps alive the Reformation era discussion of how our church should relate to Rome. If a fence were drawn down the middle of world Christendom, Lutherans would be on the same side with Roman Catholics looking at the Reformed on the other side. Opportunity for further discussion has been made by the accession of Joseph Ratzinger as bishop of Rome. A world renowned theologian in his own right, Benedict XVI was friend to the late confessional scholar Hermann Sasse. Coming from Germany, he has an intimate knowledge of Luther that was lacking in his predecessors. Presenting an in-depth, insider's examination of the current pope's views on the Lord's Supper is Father James Massa. We call attention to the third section of his article, “Difficulties with Luther,” especially footnote 18. These articles are sure to stimulate reflection on our own faithful confession and administration of this blessed sacrament.

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