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Seeking Unity among Christians and Christian Churches

One decade ago the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (*JDDJ*) was hailed as the document resolving a doctrinal dispute between the Lutherans and Roman Catholics that had simmered since the Reformation. *CTQ* published a response to *JDDJ* (see *CTQ* 62 [April 1998]: 83-106) and a related article (see Gottfried Martins, "Agreement and Disagreement on Justification by Faith Alone," *CTQ* 65 [July 2001]: 195-223). Reinhard Slenczka offers a retrospect on how Roman Catholic doctrinal practice reveals that *JDDJ* has not brought about the unity on justification that it trumpeted.

Darius Petkunas relates how the Roman Catholic king of Poland required his Lutheran, Reformed, and Bohemian Brethren subjects to form one administrative unit in the Reformation era, and the result was the *Consensus of Sandomierz* in 1570. The Reformed used it as a confession to establish fellowship. In the decades that followed, the Lutherans extradited themselves from this arrangement and committed themselves to the Augsburg Confession. An earlier generation of Lutheran pastors was introduced to the *Consensus of Sandomierz* through a short article by Jaroslav Pelikan that appeared in *Concordia Theological Monthly* 18:11 (November 1947): 825-837. Pelikan cited the *Consensus* as an example of how Reformation-era Lutherans and Reformed shared fellowship. Petkunas takes exception to this view and argues that the Lutherans did not see it a confessional document.

Samuel Nafzger draws on his decades of experience in church relations on behalf of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to write about how Christians can and should relate with one another. Originally an address to students on this campus, it is now offered to our readers.

The Theological Observer section includes Robert Benne's reflections on the tragic convention actions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) this past August. Darius Petkunas gives our readers insight into the current situation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania.

As we draw closer to celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in the year 2017, undoubtedly many questions will be raised about Christian unity by both church leaders and people in the pews. This issue should be of help in addressing such questions.

The Editors