Teaching as a reconciling act occurs when classroom language and deeds are transformed into new and vital learning that allows all participants in classrooms, teachers and students to take on identities as active, deserving learners. Reconciliation is about relationships with others in which “the other(s),” usually disenfranchised students, are conceptualized as “more like me,” the esteem historically granted to the teacher. As Christian teachers, the authors recognize that their vertical relationships with God affect their horizontal relationships with students.

The theme of this issue is reconciliation. Every author in this issue approaches this theme from different angles, but the theoretical framework behind each article emphasizes vertical and horizontal relationships. In “Reading as Reconciling,” Kristine Gritter examines how choice in text selection affords two disenfranchised urban middle school students opportunities to grapple with horizontal relationships with peers. This article focuses on reconciliation through the lens of adolescents.

In “Seeing the ‘Me’ in ASD through Children’s Picture Books,” Christina Belcher and Kimberly Maich focus on texts as agents of reconciliation. By merging characteristics of quality picture books with narratives of children with autism and Asperger’s syndrome (ASD), the authors examine how texts allow perceptions of children with ASD to be transformed into richer, fuller constructs of image bearers of God.

In “‘Telling, Sharing, Doing’: Origins and Iterations of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities Russia Initiative,” historian Richard Scheuerman describes the unusual circumstances of 1989-1994 when unprecedented and previously inconceivable reconciliation occurred in international educational forums. Scheuerman’s account of Peter and Anita Deyneka’s leadership for reconciliation is faith building. Despite recent tensions between the United States and Russia, the reconciling power of God can blur political and ideological borders.

In June Hyun’s article titled ‘Facilitating Student-Teacher Relationships: Kinder Training,’ the focus of reconciliation is at the teacher training level. Focusing on the vertical relationships of teachers and students, school counselor/educator Hyun extends Adlerian therapeutic tenets successful in restoring familial relations to a framework for respectful student-teacher relationships.

Finally, this issue concludes with several book reviews of texts that foster insight into reconciliation. First, Max Hunter, Teaching Fellow for the John Perkins Center for Reconciliation, Leadership Training, and Community Development, details the life of Septima Clark in Freedom’s Teacher: The Life of Septima Clark. As Hunter observes, this chronicle of Clark “grant[s] the reader a
greater appreciation of the power of black women and incremental change.” Septima’s life is a study in racial reconciliation. Following this review, graduate students in Seattle Pacific University’s educational programs complete this issue with summaries of reconciling texts that inspired them to enhance the vertical relationships in their lives.

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