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From the Editor

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From the Editor

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Sean Schat, Redeemer University

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Welcome to the Fall issue of the 2021 ICCTE Journal. I hope this editor's letter finds you safe and well, despite the challenges and complexity of the ongoing global pandemic. I also hope your academic year is off to a good start, and that you are blessing your students, and experiencing blessings in turn.

As you well know, teaching is a challenging vocation in the best of times. Teaching during a pandemic can be a daunting, even overwhelming experience for some. The essays and articles in this issue focus on issues of civic education, coping with uncertainty, and moral development, all very timely topics. In their article, Alex Lin and Cathy Rim consider the relationship between a Christian worldview and civic education, exploring a number of important questions and action plans. In her essay, Carolyn Mitten reflects back on the uncertainties she faced as she began her own teaching career during the recession, and offers words of advice and encouragement for new teachers entering the profession during a worldwide pandemic. In the final article, Kristine Smith explores the relationship between character education and moral development, reviewing the literature and providing a number of implications for Christian education.

While the pandemic can bring out the best in communities, it has also provided fertile soil for dissent and tensions. I teach an elective course that prepares some of our students for teaching Bible in a Christian school. We recently read Robert Kunzman's 2012 *Educational Leadership*

article, "How to Talk about Religion." Kunzman introduces readers to the concept of **Civic Multilingualism**, which he describes as "the ability to converse across different religious and ethics perspectives in search of understanding, compromise, and common ground" (p. 45). Kunzman draws a number of important distinctions that are particularly germane for today's complexities. He advocates for "*Respect, Not Tolerance*" (p. 46), noting that tolerance often results in ignorance and reluctant acceptance, while respect "requires an appreciation for why religious adherents believe or live the way they do. Students who have this understanding...will be better equipped to thoughtfully discuss these commitments, especially when conflicts arise in the public square" (46). However, Kunzman is also clear that "*Respect Does Not Mean Endorsement*" (p. 46). Seeking to understand where others are coming from does not obligate us to support their beliefs. But it can create the opportunity for positive relationships, rich dialogue, and mutual appreciation, which are too often missing in today's complex and contested contexts. In their exit ticket after class, one of my students provided an apt and timely observation:

"I find that more than ever, we tend to focus on differences of opinions, rather than finding similarities and common ground between opposing sides. Unfortunately, the pandemic has amplified this conflict due to the vaccinated versus non-vaccinated arguments. The contrasting perspectives have caused a nation-wide divide, given varying beliefs, communication methods, and levels of understanding. Challenging questions must be raised such as, "Why do people have such a hard time digesting

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and valuing differing opinions?" and, "How can we make it safe to appropriately engage in conversation with those who may not believe in or value civic multilingualism?" (Personal Communication, used with permission)

I hope the articles in this issue provide helpful responses and insights for exploring such questions.

Reference

Kunzman, R. (2012). How to talk about religion. *Educational Leadership*, 69(7), 44-48.

2021/2022 ICCTE Webinar Series

The *2022 ICCTE Conference Planning Committee* and The *ICCTE Journal* are co-sponsoring a webinar series this year, as a lead up to the 2022 conference, hosted by George Fox University, which will take place May 24-26. This webinar series will feature Journal authors and past conference presenters.

Dr. Nyaradzo Mvududu, dean of the School of Education at Seattle Pacific University was our first speaker. Dr. Mvududu's presentation was entitled, *How far will we go?* In this presentation she suggested steps to support individual growth in the area of addressing race and in helping those who desire to teach and work in culturally responsive ways but are not sure how to go about it. A recording of the webinar is found here: <https://youtu.be/w6qo1kvcwcw>

Several more webinars are planned, including one on November 11. Look for an upcoming message from ICCTE for more information and registration details.