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A Sacred Pedagogy for Today: Learning from the Sermon on the Mount

Abstract

Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount offers a pedagogical framework for Christian belief and identity, yet it also provides a pedagogical framework and strategy for encountering and experiencing “the other” in ways that can bridge the polarizing aspects of religion, nationality, culture, gender and race. The insights of the Matthean Jesus concerning retaliation, love for enemies, and projection can be used to religiously educate towards awareness of the humanity of “the other” and also the awareness of the humanity of one’s self. Thus, leading to dialogue, understanding, and the further humanization of all.

Introduction

This study seeks to glean a fresh religiously educative perspective from a familiar sacred pedagogy. That sacred pedagogy is the Sermon on the Mount as found in the Gospel of Matthew. While the Sermon on the Mount can easily be identified as such it is also a pedagogy that seeks to transcend differences while also offering hope to its hearers and practitioners.

Echoing the conference theme, it is evident that there is “a growing chasm that exists in democracies around the world” in which communication across divides has become more challenging. Strangely, though, the very means for combating such challenges and crossing such chasms may be in the primary texts and documents of various religious traditions. The Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew is one of these texts and this study seeks to demonstrate this very point.

Gabriel Moran once wrote that “Christianity is an invitation to human intelligence and freedom to re-create the world.”¹ The hope is that this study would accomplish as much. Moreover, Moran also wrote that in ecumenical discussions, “Christianity also has a place if it is willing to take the humble role of cooperating in the interpretation of human experience.”² Again, this study seeks to offer an interpretation of human experience that seeks to bridge divides in ways that can lead towards humanization and understanding, but not under the assumption that its way is the only way. Using philosophical research methodology³ it will draw upon categories from the fields of education, religious education, and biblical interpretation in order to support the thesis that the Matthean Jesus offers a sacred pedagogy for transcending differences and crossing divides.

¹ Gabriel Moran, *Designs for Religion: Toward Ecumenical Education*, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), 97.

² *Ibid.*, 48.

³ In *Method in Philosophic Inquiry for Christian Education* Elmer Towns writes, “The aim of philosophic methodology is to describe and analyze thought, throwing light on limitations, and resources, clarifying presumptions and consequences, and relating potentialities to creative areas of Christian religious education.”

The Gift of the Null

In *The Educational Imagination: On the Design and Evaluation of School Programs* Eliot Eisner posits that all schools teach three curricula: the explicit, the implicit, and the null.⁴ According to Eisner the explicit curriculum is what is clearly taught in an educational setting like a classroom. Things like learning how to write and read or learning the specific aspects of the history of a country fall under this curriculum category.⁵ Embedded within and without this form of curricula is the implicit curriculum which is what is taught through the kind of place the school or learning environment is and seeks to be.⁶ Those aspects of the implicit curriculum might be the very structure and layout of the classroom, the ways of reward and punishment, the wording and layout of the materials being used. In contrast to these first two is the null aspect of the curriculum which is what is not taught in the given curriculum.

Eisner's distinction of the three aspects of curriculum are particularly helpful in uncovering how the sacred pedagogy of the Matthean Jesus, as found in the Sermon on the Mount, can be used as a guide for bridging the polarizing aspects of religion, nationality, culture, gender, and race. Within the Sermon on the Mount there is a pedagogical framework and strategy for encountering and experiencing the other that maintains the dignity and humanity of all parties. Unfortunately, since the Sermon on the Mount is in the Gospel of Matthew, which is one of the authoritative documents of the church catholic, this text has traditionally fallen under the curriculum ideology of religious orthodoxy. In some respects, this has served to undermine the radical and subversive nature of many of the teachings found therein. As Eliot Eisner notes, one of the aims of religious orthodoxy ideology in curriculum is to pass on the faith of the church, to pass on God's Word and not to question it.⁷ As a result, a null curriculum has developed around the Sermon on the Mount that has resulted in a "simplistic analysis" wherein "there is an absence of a set of considerations perspectives."⁸ In fact, some have argued that this is the result of the increasing influence of the Roman Empire on the church over the first few centuries culminating in Constantine's conversion to Christianity in the fourth century.⁹ What happened during this time is the "oppressive reality" of the Roman Empire slowly absorbed the message of the Matthean Jesus thereby rendering it less radical.¹⁰ Yet, when this curriculum is freed from the confines of religious orthodoxy ideology amazing insights are brought forth. Insights that can help to lead towards dialogue, understanding, and the further humanization of all. Scholar Walter Wink writes concerning the teachings found in the Sermon on the Mount, "These sayings are, in fact, so radical, so unprecedented, and so threatening, that it has taken all these centuries just to begin to grasp their implications."¹¹

If examined closely, one will notice that in certain places in the Sermon on the Mount the Matthean Jesus takes an explicit teaching of his tradition and inserts the null aspect of it into it.

⁴ Elliot Eisner, *The Educational Imagination: On the Design and Evaluation of School Programs*, (New York: MacMillan, 1994), 87-107.

⁵ Ibid., 87.

⁶ Ibid., 97.

⁷ Ibid., 58.

⁸ Ibid., 97.

⁹ Wes Howard-Brook, *Empire Baptized: How the Church Embraced What Jesus Rejected 2nd – 5th Centuries*, (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2016).

¹⁰ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2000), 51.

¹¹ Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress 1992), 184.

By doing so he thereby makes the null aspect an explicit aspect within his new teaching. As a result, he transcends the “us vs. them” mindset of his people by incorporating “the other” in his teaching. This is borne out in Matthew 5:38-39 wherein Jesus states: “You have heard that it was said, “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” Here the Matthean Jesus is citing Leviticus 24:20 where it says, “Anyone who maims another shall suffer the same injury in return: fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; the injury inflicted is the injury suffered.” Jesus then follows with his own teaching where he makes the null aspect i.e. non-retaliation, transcending revenge, an explicit part of his teaching. He says, “But I say to you, do not resist/retaliate the evildoer” and proceeds to give strategies for doing so that includes retaining the dignity of the enemy or “the other.” He takes the potential null curriculum of his audience and he makes it apart of his new explicit curriculum.

In order to understand just how powerful this new teaching is it is necessary to locate and define the “evildoers” of which Jesus speaks. The Matthean Jesus is quite specific in the following verses of Matthew 5:39-41:

“³⁹ But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; ⁴⁰ and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; ⁴¹ and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile.”

The evildoers are masters of households or wealthy landowners, creditors, and Roman soldiers, all of whom were great purveyors of injustice in the ancient Roman world. It is important to note that the audience of the Matthean Jesus were peasants, those who had felt the brunt of the unjust actions of these evildoers. Walter Wink writes concerning Jesus’ audience, “There are among his hearers people who were subjected to these very indignities, forced to stifle outrage at their dehumanizing treatment by the hierarchical system of class, race, gender, age, and status, and as a result of imperial occupation.”¹² When they cry out, pray, and yearn for the arrival of the expected Messiah it is these very evildoers that they hope will get their due for the way that they have treated them. It is the master or wealthy landowner that seeks to humiliate the inferior slave or peasant farmer with a slap across the face. It is the wealthy creditor that sues the peasant in order to get as much as possible out of him even though he is already in tremendous debt. It is the Roman soldier that imposes his power on a local peasant by compelling him to carry his bags for a mile. All these things were incredibly dehumanizing and demeaning. Yet, instead of enabling the fires of resentment and anger to be further stoked in such a tumultuous time the Matthean Jesus offers a message that seeks to transcend such hurt and resentment. He offers a third way that enabled the oppressed to regain their human dignity while at the same time maintaining the dignity of the oppressor/evildoer. The Matthean Jesus takes what all too easily could have become the null aspect of his new teaching and makes it an explicit part of his new teaching. The evildoer isn’t to be made null but instead is to be incorporated. Revenge isn’t made explicit, instead it is made null! The Matthean Jesus will not let his audience off the hook, and remember they were certainly justified in wanting revenge.¹³

¹² Ibid., 176.

¹³ Roman oppression had been quite brutal with the squashing of a Jewish rebellion in the city of Sepphoris in 4 B.C. which was just four miles north of Nazareth where Jesus grew up. The Roman legions burned down Sepphoris along with other surrounding towns, destroyed the countryside and enslaved the local population. To make matters, two thousand men crucified from that area as well. This area in northern Galilee was seriously traumatized with mass killing and enslavement of upwards of tens of thousands of people. It is believed that Jesus was born sometime in the vicinity of 4 B.C.E. He grew up in the midst of the residue of this trauma. In one sense, it could be likened to the trauma New Yorkers felt and continue to feel from the terrorist attacks on 9/11, yet far worse. Jesus

Thus, in verse 39 where the Matthean Jesus says, “But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also” he is giving his audience a strategic way of recapturing their humanity in the face of “the evildoer” who seeks to demean them with a backhanded slap. By turning the other cheek the evildoer is robbed of their power to humiliate the oppressed because only equals were hit with a right punch.¹⁴ It forces the master or the wealthy landowner to treat the peasant as an equal. The action of turning the other cheek is a way for the oppressed to regain their humanity without dehumanizing the oppressor/evildoer. In fact, it could, but for a moment, cause the evildoer to realize that the person in front of them is a human being just like them.¹⁵ Due note, this teaching moves towards commonality instead of difference. It may not necessarily result in that, but that is one of its goals.

In verse 40 Jesus gives another strategy for dealing with the evildoer/oppressor, “and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well.” Walter Wink notes that only the poorest of the poor would have only a garment to give as collateral for a loan.¹⁶ Through this teaching the Matthean Jesus encourages those in his audience to take off all of their clothes while in court and walk off stark naked so as to protest the system that created the debt in the first place. Moreover, nakedness was a taboo in Judaism and shame fell more on the person causing the indebtedness i.e. the evildoer. Thus, yet again, the oppressed regain their humanity without succumbing to retaliation and revenge in a way that exposes the very injustice of the debt system. In the process, “it offers the creditor a chance to see, perhaps for the first time in his life, what his practices cause, and to repent.”¹⁷

Lastly, is the strategy that the Matthean Jesus gives in dealing with a Roman soldier compelling peasantry to carry their bags. In verse 41 Jesus says, “and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile.” Roman soldiers were allowed to levy on subject peoples a single mile of impressed labor but no more. In fact, if they used a person for more than one mile and got caught doing so they could be flogged. Thus, yet again, Jesus offers a strategy for retaining one’s dignity while also respecting the dignity and humanity of the oppressor. The oppressed seize the initiative by offering to go an extra mile throwing the Roman soldier/evildoer off balance and into a situation he has never been before.¹⁸ Similar to the previous teachings, this action also gives the evildoer a chance to see what it is like to beg and to be put in such a position as a peasant. Maybe this could also result in repentance and change on the part of the soldier.

Implicit within this new pedagogy of the Matthean Jesus is its egalitarianism. As noted earlier the Matthean Jesus is giving this teaching to a people who have been oppressed and dehumanized but the strategies therein do not seek to answer the evildoer in kind. Implied in these strategies is the inherent dignity of all people, particularly the poor but not at the expense of the rich. One could say that a goal within these strategies is equalization. Maybe the wealthy landowner will think twice about humiliating his inferior now that the humanness of the latter

probably had extended family members who took part in this rebellion and, in turn, were crucified, enslaved, or killed. Furthermore, Roman oppression did not abate as Jesus grew up in Nazareth. This was in the air that he breathed. It was part of the backdrop of life in Galilee. Thus, Jesus’ words in the Sermon on the Mount must be understood with such things in mind. Richard Horsley, *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 28-30.

¹⁴ Remember in the ancient world the left hand was not used for striking but only for unclean tasks.

¹⁵ Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, 175-176.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 178.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 179.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 182.

has been communicated in an effective way. Maybe the creditor will be concerned about those who are indebted to him now that he has come to face to face with the actual effects of his loaning practices. Maybe the Roman soldier will have developed empathy for the local populations that he works amongst and not be as coldhearted towards them as he was previously. Strangely, though, the Matthean Jesus does not rely on the evildoer to get it right but instead calls on the oppressed to take the initiative. It is often not perceived in this way but evildoers need the oppressed more than they might realize. For the oppressed, through their subversive strategies that seek to retain the humanity of the evildoer, can bring them back “down to earth.”

In a similar vein, having examined Matthew 5:38-41 with the aide of biblical scholarship and the curriculum lens of Elliot Eisner this study now turns to the words of the Matthean Jesus in verses 43-48 of chapter 5:

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

This passage is an excellent example of the Matthean Jesus taking the null of his community (the enemy) and making it apart of his explicit teaching to love. In fact, he is expanding the definition of neighbor to his audience which would have only considered those who were fellow Jews to be their neighbor. For the Matthean Jesus “neighbor” embraces “diversities of gender, wealth, kin, physical condition, age and ethnicity.”¹⁹ Those formerly deemed “outside” are no longer so deemed. There is a clear inclusiveness in this teaching. The basis for this inclusive love is God who the Matthean Jesus claims loves all people, righteous and unrighteous, completely. There are no exceptions, all are to be loved because God loves all. That is what this sacred pedagogy of the Matthean Jesus explicitly teaches!

The relevancy of this teaching for today becomes ever stronger with each passing day as what Cornel West calls the “neofascist discourse”²⁰ becomes more the norm. According to West, “What happens is, in a neofascist discourse, and it’s true around the world, if you can define a community as pure and characterize those on the outside as a threat, as impure, and then view yourself as the one coming to the rescue to preserve the purity it can be based on race, it can be based on religion, on politics.”²¹ Imagine for a moment if people, in order to combat this neofascist discourse, remembered the explicit words of the Matthean Jesus that they are (1) to love the person across from them and (2) they are to do so because that person is also loved by God just as they are. It might even help in those moments for them to also remember the very evildoers that the Matthean Jesus references before this: the slavemaster/authoritarian boss, the creditor/ruthless Wall St exec, and the Roman soldier/power-abusing police officer. If a point is made to retain the humanity of the enemy/the other great potential arises for communion and understanding. As Thomas Groome notes, “our deepest desire is to transcend sectarianism and

¹⁹ Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins: A Sociopolitical and Religious Reading*, (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2000), 154.

²⁰ “Joe Rogan Experience #1325 - Dr. Cornel West,” YouTube video, 1:58:21, “PowerfulJRE,” July 24, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ViWvAnvT17c>

²¹ Ibid.

parochialism and live instead with authentic love of self and other and in solidarity with all people.”²²

At the end of his teaching to love enemies the Matthean Jesus concludes with, “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly father is perfect.” Without going too much into exegesis it should be noted that a better translation would be, “Be whole/complete, therefore, as your heavenly Father is whole/complete.”²³ After all, God is whole or complete in that God loves all, or more succinctly, his love is all-inclusive. It knows no distinctions in that God does not have “a them” in the equation of “us vs. them.” God is for all people and therefore there is no “us vs. them” for God! This is incredibly important because if one looks closely at various movements like Hitler and the rise of the Nazis,²⁴ American Nationalism,²⁵ White Supremacy,²⁶ religious fundamentalism of various forms,²⁷ there is embedded within the belief that “God” is on their side. God is a means of legitimization for these movements and ideologies. All these groups invoked God and the scriptures in support of their endeavors. Such ideologies must be confronted with this true teaching which has the power to defeat them at their roots because of its inclusivity.

One wonders if such ideologies are but the result of spending too much time “within” a given community, however religious it purports to be.²⁸ The Matthean Jesus’ words push the audience from within to without; something, it could be argued, that religious educators are called to do as well. Here Thomas Groome is helpful when he writes, “God’s universal love lends the mandate to people of God to live likewise – to love without limits or borders. There should never be “us and them” but only “we” – bonded as one human family.”²⁹ For Groome, these words are connected to his emphasis on retrieving a “Catholic Openness” within religious education.³⁰ In articulating this emphasis he writes, “Catholicity means caring deeply about the well-being of all people, the most immediate and furthest away. The only ones more deserving of care are those most in need of it – the “poor” of any kind or circumstance. Catholicity has an open horizon and genuine altruism in its care. It requires concern for the human family as a seamless garment.”³¹

The last aspect of the Sermon on the Mount to be examined in this study comes later in chapter 7. Herein the Matthean Jesus tells his audience not to judge others and not to project their own sins onto them. This study has consistently demonstrated how Jesus takes the potential null curriculum of his audience and makes it explicit within his pedagogy in order to move people towards greater understanding and love. Yet again, the Matthean Jesus does just that. Here’s what the Matthean Jesus says:

²² Thomas Groome, *Educating For Life: A Spiritual Vision for Every Teacher and Parent*, (Allen, TX: Thomas More, 1998), 395.

²³ Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, 267-268.

²⁴ Hitler believed that he was called by God and became more firm in this belief after surviving an assassination attempt. Moreover, there developed in Nazi Germany “Positive Christianity” which was a hybrid of Nazism and Christianity.

²⁵ This is evident in the various civil liturgies that take place at sporting events and community events throughout the country.

²⁶ The Ku Klux Klan’s ideology is bound up with Christianity as made evident by their use of crosses on their robes as well as the burning of crosses.

²⁷ Al Qaeda and Westboro Baptist Church are but two examples.

²⁸ Gabriel Moran, “Two Languages of Religious Education,” *The Living Light* 14, (Spring 1977): 44.

²⁹ Thomas Groome, *Educating For Life*, 401.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 393-423.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 401.

“Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. ² For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. ³ Why do you see the speck in your neighbor’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your neighbor, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ while the log is in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor’s eye.”³²

The null here is the self or individual doing the judging and noticing what is wrong with “the other.” The Matthean Jesus takes the focus on the other and places it back on the self or the individual. The other is not to be the primary focus but instead the secondary focus after the individual has done their own work on her or his self. If this is not sought after one will be lacking in their ability to see comprehend the perspectives of the other and the commonality therein.³³ Thereby, a null aspect remains; the self, which can lead to further division amongst human beings.

Walter Wink notes that this passage is the earliest known teaching on projection.³⁴ What is being done here is the Matthean Jesus is drawing attention to one’s own shadow which is all too often projected onto others. The speck that one sees in another’s eye is but the result of the log in his or her own eye that he or she fails to see. What the Matthean Jesus is teaching is that the very thing that one might find annoying or wrong about the other or their enemy is the very thing that is annoying or wrong about one’s self. The well-known statement, “If you spot it you got it” brings the point home here.

In what can be argued as being an incredibly divisive time in the history of the United States projection is on display in a myriad of places. In fact, all human beings are guilty of projection which is also why from an educational perspective this is such a great teaching. To echo John Dewey, this very teaching of the Matthean Jesus provides an excellent opportunity to use “everyday” experiences for educating towards growth. This growth would be an awareness of commonality that leads to solidarity amongst human beings.³⁵

Strikingly and sadly, the truth of projection is often on display in the two-party political system in the United States government. This is best represented by various media outlets that can easily be divided according to the left/right spectrum. There is no longer the news but conservative news or liberal news and those in between. Depending on one’s political bent they can find a news outlet that will not so much as challenge them but validate and legitimate their currently held beliefs. In many respects, both sides constantly project onto the other claims of corruption, partisanship, not putting the American people first and endless other issues. A simple back and forth between MSNBC and Fox News proves this point. This is no accident. In fact, looking at the extremes found on both the left and right there is a strange mirroring that goes on.³⁶ Eerily, this was on display with the media’s handling recent shootings in El Paso and Dayton coming within a few hours of each other. The Left was quick to latch onto the radical views of the gunman in El Paso for his motivation for killing others. Similarly, the Right was

³² Matthew 7:1-6

³³ Eisner, *The Educational Imagination*, 97.

³⁴ Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, 273.

³⁵ John Dewey, *Experience and Education*, (New York: Free Press, 2015), 40.

³⁶ Marc A. Thiessen, “Yes, antifa is the moral equivalent of neo-Nazis,” *washingtonpost.com*, August 30, 2017, Accessed August 20, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/yes-antifa-is-the-moral-equivalent-of-neo-nazis/2017/08/30/9a13b2f6-8d00-11e7-91d5-ab4e4bb76a3a_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.23ab0ff5005e

quick to latch onto the radical views of the gunman in Dayton.³⁷ This prompted some to claim that we are in the midst of a cold civil war with the El Paso gunman representing the right and the Dayton gunman representing the left.³⁸

With the words of the Matthean Jesus on projection in mind could such tragedies not only be viewed as things to be mourned but also as opportunities for religious education? Again John Dewey is helpful, “It thus becomes the office of the educator to select those things within the range of existing experience that have the promise and potentiality of presenting new problems which by stimulating new ways of observation and judgment will expand the area of further experience.”³⁹ Rather than seeing those across the divide as being unreachable the Matthean Jesus’ teaching on projection suggests otherwise, that areas of disagreement might also be areas of understanding and commonality. Thus, “the other” or “the enemy” is a way in which one can come to know the person across from them better as well as her or himself better. The null aspect of the self becomes more aware through “the other.” Walter Wink is helpful,

“The enemy can be the way of God. We cannot come to terms with our shadow except through our enemies, for we have almost no other access to those unacceptable parts of ourselves that need redeeming except through the mirror that our enemies hold up to us. This then is another, more intimate reason for loving our enemies: we are dependent on our enemies for our own individuation. We may not be able to be whole people without them...As we become aware of our projections on our enemies, we are freed from the fear that we will overreact murderously towards them. We are able to develop an objective rage at the injustices that they are perpetrating while still seeing them as children of God. The energy squandered nursing hatred becomes available to God for confronting the wrong or transforming the relationship.”⁴⁰

Conclusion

This study has sought to demonstrate that the sacred pedagogy of the Sermon on the Mount is also a pedagogy that transcends differences and creates hope. The Matthean Jesus’ inclusion of the evildoer into an explicit aspect of his teaching reminds all people that even the worst among them must not be forgotten. In fact, not only should the dignity of those fighting injustice be retained but also those perpetuating injustice should be retained as well. This does not seek to excuse or enable injustice or unhealthy behavior. Instead it seeks to retain the human dignity of those who would seek to diminish the humanity of those they believe to be less than human. The way to answer evil is not with evil but with goodness and love just as the Matthean Jesus commands. The distinctions of religion, nationality, culture, gender and race are secondary to the very humanity of each and every person. When any of these things are used to diminish one’s humanity and make them null that is a sure sign that something has gone wrong. Moreover, the Matthean Jesus doesn’t move his audience towards difference but instead commonality. This is made evident not only in his call to love enemies but also in his teaching

³⁷ “The Second Civil War Is Coming Into Focus, Reza Aslan Blames ALL Trump Supporters,” YouTube video, 28:15, “Tim Pool,” August 5, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VBOoGBmD7EM>

³⁸ Zack Budryk, “Princeton professor: 'We are in a cold civil war',” *thehill.com*, August 4, 2019, Accessed August 20, 2019, <https://thehill.com/homenews/sunday-talk-shows/456111-princeton-professor-we-are-in-a-cold-civil-war>

³⁹ Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 75.

⁴⁰ Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, 273.

on projection. Human beings are generally bothered not so much by other human beings but by the things that they don't like about themselves that they see in others. Hence, the null of the individual.

Without a doubt, there is much to be gleaned from this sacred pedagogy that found its beginnings in the back country of the one of the greatest empires the world has ever seen. It is amazing to ponder and learn from the profound words of a seemingly insignificant peasant spoken two thousand years ago. Clearly in solidarity with the oppressed he sought to build a bridge towards the evildoer and the other. From breaking bread with a tax collector to purposely sojourning through unclean Samaria to healing a Roman centurion's servant there was no divide he would not cross. He made his nulls and his people's nulls an explicit part of his teaching and life. More than anything it is hoped that this study of a very familiar sacred pedagogy has sparked the interest and imagination of its readers to teach creatively for the humanization of all and the transcendence of difference.

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