

TMF Board Meeting – October 2019

In attendance: Steven, Kevin, JoAnn, Rachel Elaine, Przemek, John Mark, Cindy

Thursday, 3 October

Participants arrived at various times. We shared supper & fellowship

Friday, 4 October

Devotion: Rachel – “In Between” Ex 16:1, Heb 10:36

Set objectives: What are the results we want to see from this time together?

Review where we’ve been, where we are, and where we’re going

Make a Plan

Details of film events

Steven’s debrief on his dissertation

Project priorities for 2020

Debrief from Steven/Przemek on time & meetings in Polan

TMF Board Matters

- Kevin: Financial Update
 - PayPal \$6800
 - Regions acct \$4000
- JoAnn: Administrative
 - Motion was made, seconded & approved to use Joe Ferdelman as our outside accountant for tax filings, etc
- Rachel: Shared communication plan for 2019 Q4
 - Set goal of \$3000 for Giving Tuesday
- Steven: Volunteers
 - Do we need to be more intentional about engaging past volunteers further? (Rachael R, Yolanda, Lisa W)
 - **Do we have materials prepared for volunteers from other countries?**
 - Are we each personally ready, equipped & prepared to work with volunteers?

Steven’s Dissertation Findings, Conclusions & Recommendations

The Third Space: The meeting of Jew & Christian in the act of Remembering Restoring & Reconciling – A case Study of the Matzevah Foundation

- Why would a Baptist minister be working in a Jewish cemetery in Poland?
 - Influence of Shoah on Christian world not the same as in Jewish world
 - Acts of loving kindness can overcome evil
 - Quantitative – numbers, qualitative – relational
 - Interviews / focus groups
 - Christian/Jew, Male/Female, Experienced/New to work (6 men, 9 women)
 - Humane orientation demonstrates concern for others
 - Liminality (in between space) for us is in the Jewish cemeteries
 - Dialogue – more than just talking, must include some kind of exchange
 - In what ways do Jew & Christian learn to dialogue through this work?

- Major Findings
 - Relationships
 - Loving Acts – caring
 - Reconciliation – experienced when working together
 - Remembering- linking action to remembered past
 - Restoration – relationships & past re-emerge
- Learning to dialogue – Framework
 - Addressing proselytizing
 - Develop common ground
 - Gaining understanding
 - Building a sense of community
 - Speaking about matters of faith
 - Confronting present past
 - Overcoming differences among them
 - Discursive space (neutral ground) to determine how to deal with issues
 - Primary components of dialogue (dialogue presents new outcomes & changes perspectives)
 - Relationship – on to one interaction
 - Group size - small group (4-5 people)
 - Curiosity
 - Honest Inquiry
 - Healthy exchange
 - Open – don't put people in boxes
 - Connecting
 - Liminality (space for transition)
 - Religious identity
- Conclusion
 - We are peacemakers and choose to be in between using the cemeteries as our liminal space
- Recommendations
 - Inroads into Jewish community – relational bridges
 - Loving Acts
 - Building a sense of community
 - Leave behind something and enter something new / allow change
 - Learn cross cultural sensitivity – what is negotiable vs what is cultural
 - Learn to leave your Christian 'baggage' behind
 - Address trauma expressed by Jews & others, develop skills to navigate emotions
 - Develop broader understanding of Jewish culture before, during & after Shoah
 - Religion has a place – how to speak truthfully within the parameters of the work
 - Make it personal – bring the memory of Shoah closer to the hearts of Christians
 - Expand Shoah educational efforts
 - Cultural stewardship – linking local resources with cemeteries

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- Discussion
 - Joint project between Christian congregation (BBC?) and Jewish congregation
 - Can you link your worldviews with those of another?
 - What other liminal spaces exist?
 - We are part of a global conversation about Jewish/Christian relationship
 - Steven should write a book

Film Showing Events

- Atlanta – 11 November
 - Steven to have conversation w/ Donna re options for Atlanta event
 - 10/14 – lunch with Karen Wienberg
 - Rachel will do post for this event
- Nashville – 12 November
 - Gordon JCC approved adding our film showing to their calendar
 - Objectives:
 - Raising awareness
 - Making inroads with Jewish community
 - Fund-raising
 - Reviewed 'schedule of events'
 - Kevin will provide ideas for daytime activities
 - All should be at library by 6:00 pm
 - Jo – Eventbrite event
 - Budget of \$2000 approved for Nashville event
 - Includes \$250 honorariums for Donna & Fred

Summer meetings in Poland

- Forum for Dialogue Among Nations
 - Contact: Suzanna Radzik
 - Might be willing to partner in spring
 - Initiated work among evangelical pastors
 - Perhaps Steven will participate?
 - Opportunity exists to help people turn thought into action
 - Encourage people to work in communities
- How do we better intersect with the Polish community?
- How do we affect the next generation?
- Rabbi Ellis – Wodzislaw – supporter may eventually fund a project we lead
- FODZ/ Piotr – FODZ/Israeli partnership in cemeteries
- Org w/ gov't funding provide helping hands to cemetery projects – Okipowa, Czestochowa, etc
- Young Israeli Jews hold negative stereotypes of Poles
- Polish Minister of Culture – 40,000 students from Israel visit Poland each year
- What would it look like if we were able to have a voice in the lives of young Israeli Jews?
- Agnieszka
 - 2 communications

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- Yahad in Unum
 - Don't abide by Halacha
 - Overwhelm area w/ film crews
 - Don't' share info
- Testimony re Doszecka story
- Hebrew term for what we do Shaviach – steward who is a messenger sent with a task
- Kim Hershon – Israeli, Canadian Jew, connected w/ Andze from Remek's office
 - Very spiritual, want to be working w/ Poles who are dealing w/ Jewish matters
- Remek needs to remain financially solvent
 - What to do w/ matzevot?

2020 & Beyond - What do we do differently

- Dan / Jewish Gen / Schools
- What educational material is embedded in Steven's research
- Structured, developed way to present material
- Replicate what we did with Jewish Gen
 - What are our non-negotiables when we come to a project?
- Developing curriculum
- Acting brings healing & reconciliation, acting = remembering
- Be open to invitations to the world of another
- How do we individually grow & develop
- Defining how we team – expectations, non-negotiables, etc
- Steven turns 65 next year – needs to pay for education & survive in retirement
- Counsel from Caroline
 - Academic grant opportunities
 - Book, compensation, etc

Saturday, 5 October

Devotion: Przemek – Shadows – Protection of God Psalms 17:18, Psalms 91:1, Psalms 36:7
Shadow of death – threat or blessing? We need discernment to determine
Kevin – 2 Cor 3:7

2019 Projects Review

- Focus: What we learned & what we see differently in view of Steven's findings
 - Czestochowa – Steven/Przemek
 - Principal function – consult & coordinate
 - Met w/ Piotr (FODZ) here as well as in Warsaw
 - Alon working w/ city to take ownership of cemetery & to seek funding for wall
 - Rachael Romero growing in ability
 - Yolanda (ind volunteer) invited Steven to Toronto
 - Yoldanda Dubranska – politically motivated – Alon's contact
 - Jewish Cultural Society – good partner to Alon
 - Multiple relationships developed in Czestochowa
 - Agata (Paris) from Pzrosł project has parent & sister in Czestochowa

- Krzepice – Steven/Przemek
 - Proj w/ Jewish Gen (8 students)
 - Met in Krakow, shared meal, orientation, Auschwitz visit(tour focus on hope)
 - All had connection to Poland
 - 3 days work in cemetery
 - Feedback from Yola – meaningful experience to work w/ Jewish Gen
 - Police engaged for protection & may end up working on projects going forward
 - Stayed at senior home
 - Brought kosher food from Krakow
 - Mealtime was primary time for interaction
 - Students spend a week in Poland prior to project
 - This project was put together quickly & lacked proper organization
 - Daily debriefs didn't happen
 - Jews of Polish origin have lost pathway to normal Jewish identity
 - Experience Jewish life
 - Experience Shabbot
 - Aleks & Filip came on the last day
 - There is a mass grave in Krzepice
 - Aleks validated TMF expertise
 - English / Polish translation was an issue – we need to decide ahead of time how we're going to deal with that
- **We need to use caution the way we communicate. Perception is reality!**
 - Dialogue – Ongoing learning process
 - Courageous conversations on race
 - Speaking your truth
 - Expectation that some conflicts won't be resolved
- Krosniewice – Steven
 - Joel took this project on to honor his Father (Shoah survivor)
 - Unable to engage the community
 - Joel hired someone to do the work
 - We will have no further involvement in this project
- Oswiecim – Jo, Kevin, Rachel, Elaine, Cindy
 - Lisa's statement – "In my studies, I deal with the worst of humanity on a daily basis. I feel like working with you has shown me the best of humanity."
 - Caution – when we're all together, don't be too comfortable. Don't let anyone become invisible.
 - When we're with Jews, we need to be careful about how we present who we are and what we do. Don't want to create any misconceptions.
- Przerosl – Steven
 - 3rd year
 - Some city cooperation (toilet, green waste, etc)

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- Mayor is schoolmate of Agata, also other connections
- This year city added add'l resources
- Next year – commemoration , add gate, clear last ¼ of cemetery
- Reclaimed lost genealogy, re-establish sanctity of cemetery
- Jan Victor – Jewish center in NY, son – director of Auschwitz
- Commemoration Project w/ FZ – Steven
 - We need to be more than 'tools'
 - 2 other organizations also partnering with FZ
 - This year 4 matzevot placed in NE Poland in one day
 - Steven – partner & documenter
 - Guerilla nature of approach
 - Going forward – 2 commemorations

Project documentation needs to be completed for Krosniewice & Przerosl

Project Proposals 2020 & Beyond – Steven

Rachel is ok with being initial contact and responding to initial cemetery inquiries
Reviewed project list and put together tentative schedule for 2020 to include:

- Czestochowa
- Krzepice
- Skrynno - commemoration
- Markuszow
- Belzyce – commemoration
- Garwolin
- Przerosl
- Przysucha
- Wieniawa
- Goniadz
- Oswiecim

Anniversary event ideas

- Video testimonials
- Create & use 10 year logo?
- 10 year anniversary event

Before closing we did a pulse check to ensure that we've met our stated objectives and were satisfied that we have.

Sunday, 6 October

Devotion: Jo – Waiting – being limited is a form of humility

Closing discussion

- Incorporate 'meeting elders of community' into our process (std Jewish practice)
- Current financial situation indicates organizational competency
- Steven is encouraged by the leadership we all show
- Steven is allowed 17k / year in wages before SS payments are affected
- We will decide about a spring trip to Poland for Steven during Nov call

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Take-aways:

Kevin – Good path financially, effective fundraising, we need more boots on the ground in Poland year round

Steven – approaching 10 years, we've learned to be patient in our process. We're being positioned to run (after crawling and walking). I need to equip others to do what I do.

Przemek – Transition year / waiting period, new relationships w/ organizations (Jewish Gen, Forum for Dialogue, etc), hopeful for future

John Mark – Echoes previous comments, better at overall communication & updates on where we are

Cindy – Looking to define her role, working to self-educate, (feedback to Cindy – Your reading/researching produces golden nuggets!)

Kevin closed us in prayer