

COMPETENCY 2C—SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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A Reflection Paper for Competency 2c—Social Responsibility
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by

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Introduction

In 1996 and in 1997, my family and I began to live and work in Warsaw, Poland, where I served with the Baptist Union of Poland. Consequently, I learned to speak Polish and learn about Polish culture. While I served as a leader and a minister within the Baptist church, I read much on Polish history. I became intrinsically interested in the history of Polish Jews during the Second World War. I visited many historical sites, such as, the Warsaw Ghetto, Majdanek, Auschwitz, and Auschwitz Birkenau. It was in these spaces, that I encountered for the first time the reality of the Shoah, and I began to deal with a question that has changed my life: What should be my response as a Christian to the Shoah?

My question ultimately led me to begin working with the Jewish community of Warsaw to care for and restore Jewish cemeteries. In due course, my work led me to establish [The Matzevah Foundation](#) (TMF) with a group of Christian friends in 2010. TMF is a 501(C)(3) non-profit corporation determined by the IRS to be a public charity (**Artifact:** [TMF IRS Determination Letter](#)). The two-fold mission of TMF is to educate the public about the Shoah and to care for and restore Jewish cemeteries in Poland (**Artifacts:** [TMF Certified Articles of Incorporation](#) and [TMF Vision Mission Statements](#)).

In this reflection paper, I will investigate academic theories concerning social responsibility and ethics. I will briefly review and consider the values of Micah 6:8 and its analogous academic constructs. I will also explore the Jewish concepts of *Tzedakah* (social justice), social responsibility, *Gemilut Chasadim* (giving of mercy or true loving-kindness), *Tikkun Olam* (the healing or repairing of the earth). I will apply my learning to the mission of TMF in its educational programs and its Jewish cemetery restoration projects in Poland.

CHAPTER 1

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Definitions of Key Terms

Competency 2c: Social Responsibility. The Andrews University Leadership Department advances a set of leadership competencies, which require students to have “theoretical knowledge and practical application” within a set of “core [leadership] competencies” of which the “leadership of others” is one group of competencies (*Leadership Handbook*, 2011, p. 36). This second group of leadership competencies addresses “the interpersonal aspects of leadership,” along with the “growth and development of others,” which is integral to the leadership function (*Leadership Handbook*, 2011, p. 36). Regarding the competency of social responsibility, “*Leadership understands social systems and is accountable to others and endeavors to see that family, community, and environmental needs are met in local and, as appropriate, in global ways.*” (*Leadership Handbook*, 2011, p. 36).

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). When considering the social responsibility of corporations, Jones (1980) views corporate social responsibility (CSR) as “the notion that corporations have an obligation to constituent groups in society other than stock holders and beyond that prescribed by law or union contract” (pp. 59-60). According to the online Cambridge

dictionary, CSR is “the practice of producing goods and services in a way that is not harmful to society or the environment” (Dictionary.cambridge.org, 2020).

Ethics. Ethics “refers to judgments about whether human behavior is right or wrong” (Johnson, 2012, p. xxi). Judgment means considering something or making a decision about something—ethics concerns our behaviors, what we do, whether it is right or wrong. Ethics are the “principles of right conduct or a system of moral values” (Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 2012, p. 151).

Halakhah. The *Halakhah* is composed of the 613 commandments, or *mitzvot*, comprising Jewish religious law. Keeping a commandment in Judaism is considered a *mitzvah*, or a righteous act. Many Jews view keeping a *mitzvah* as a good deed. The plural of *mitzvah* is *mitzvot*. The *Halakhah* is divided into two parts: laws/*mitzvot* drawn directly from the Torah and laws/*mitzvot* arising from rabbinical exegesis inferred in the Torah. Wolf (2010) traces the etymology of the Hebrew word, *Halakhah* (also transliterated as *halakah* and *halakoth*). He states that it originates from the Hebrew root, *halakot* means “ways of the oral tradition” and is associated with the word *halak*, which describes “how one should walk;” moreover, Wolf explains that the purpose of the *Halakhah* “was to define Jewish identity in contrast to the surrounding nations” (p. 32).

Jewish Cemetery. Burial grounds in Jewish life and particularly in religious practice, are viewed differently and are considered to be holy places. In Hebrew, various terms refer to burial grounds or cemeteries; the main ones are “*Bet Keverot* ‘house of graves’, *Bet Hayim* ‘house of life,’ or *Bet Olam* ‘house of eternity’” (Kadish, 2011, p. 59). In my association and work with *Komisja Rabiniczna do Spraw Cmentarzy w Polsce* (RCC in Poland), I primarily encounter in Hebrew, *Beit Chaim*, which in Polish is *Dom Żywych*, or “the house of the living.”

Matzevah. The term *matzevah* (מצבה) is Hebrew and means a memorial stone or monument; a matzevah is erected in memory of a significant event or placed at the head of the grave of a deceased person. In Jewish cemeteries, the headstone or matzevah signifies remembering and honoring the dead and ensures that the grave will not be desecrated. The Matzevah Foundation uses the iconography of the matzevah because its mission is to honor the memory of the Jewish community of Poland by caring for and restoring Jewish cemeteries in Poland as a means to reconcile Jews and Christians.

Morals. Morals are “specific standards of right and wrong” (Johnson, 2012, p. xxi).

Shoah. Unless citing a source which uses the term Holocaust, I will use the Hebrew term, *Shoah* (catastrophe or destruction) to define the events of what many refer to as the Holocaust. I make this distinction for two reasons. Firstly, as Manosevitz (2010) emphasizes, the term Shoah is “used by modern scholars in reference to that event” and secondly, the word, Holocaust, is a Greek word that means “burnt offering,” which according to Manosevitz extends some type of “religious significance” to the event, adding that “there was nothing religious about Hitler's ‘Final Solution’” (p. 55).

Social Responsibility. Social responsibility is “the approach of an organization to managing the impact it has on society” (“Social responsibility,” 2007). Social responsibility is predicated upon behavior determined “within certain socially acceptable limits,” that could be “written laws or regulations;” however, social limits could be based on “an accepted organization-wide moral or ethical code” (“Social responsibility,” 2007). If organizations break such codes, they “are viewed as irresponsible” (“Social responsibility,” 2007). According to Fisher (2004), Davidson and Griffin in 2000 defined social responsibility as “[t]he set of

obligations an organisation [sic] has to protect and enhance the society in which it functions” (cited in, Fisher, 2004, p. 392).

My Background and Knowledge Base

The first formal course I took in ethics was Basic Christian Ethics, CNETH 431 in seminary. The course dealt with essential Christian ethics. Additionally, I enrolled in two community mission practicums—MISSN 548: Missions Seminar/Practicum and MISSN 549: Missions Seminars/Practicums. I also took two social work courses—SOCWK 425: Ministry-Based Evangelism and Church Growth and SOCWK 4950: Principles and Practice of Biblical Intervention (**Artifact:** [Reece SWBTS Transcript](#)). My seminary education along with my training and pastoral experiences have worked together significantly to shape my ethics and values.

From my pastoral experience, I have a great deal of expertise in developing and overseeing community ministry projects. As a photojournalist, I have covered tornadoes, mass shootings, and other tragedies. As a Christian, I have worked following such events as a disaster-relief volunteer. In Kosovo, I experienced the devastating impact of war upon people and its aftermath. Following the war, in Kosovo, I led a missionary team to deal with fallout of ethnic cleansing and the murder of neighbors by ministering and assisting families to reclaim their lives and start anew (**Artifacts:** [Kosovo Discovery 2000](#) and [KFOR Badge](#)).

My experience in Kosovo led me to understand how hatred separates people and fosters bloodshed. I also learned that bloodshed affects people and wounds must be healed in order to restore relationships in communities. I carried these lessons with me to Poland where God led me to deal with one of the greatest atrocities of the modern era. As a follower of Christ, I began to

work toward reconciliation with the Jewish community of Poland through caring for and restoring Jewish cemeteries.

Before entering the leadership program at Andrews University, my fundamental philosophical and ethical foundations were grounded in the theistic worldview and Judeo-Christian values. Questions of worth related to “what a person or a society conceives of as being good or preferable” (Knight, 2006, p. 28). Upon these Judeo-Christian values and my seminary training, I guided the work of Christian volunteers in caring for and restoring Polish-Jewish cemeteries. To direct our work, I produced a rudimentary handbook linking Jewish and Christian values called [Project Nehemiah](#) (**Artifact**). Nonetheless, I came to realize that my perspective was distinctly Christian and little understanding of the Jewish ethical perspective associated with such work.

From the beginning of my work in Jewish cemeteries in Poland, Micah 6:8 was the central biblical and ethical construct that I used to guide my work and lead Christian volunteers to care for and restore Polish-Jewish cemeteries. Micah 6:8 became the ethical underpinnings that I employed in establishing and leading TMF. In my experience at Andrews, I began to explore and build upon this moral and ethical foundation for my work in leading TMF.

As a part of developing my theoretical ethical understanding for [Competencies 5a: The Shoah and its Impact, and 5b: Jewish Ethics](#) (**Artifact**), I enrolled in three courses at Andrews University: LEAD 645 Ethical Leadership, LEAD 636 Issues In Leadership Foundations, and LEAD 756 Advanced Studies: Jewish Ethics.

In my study of ethics during LEAD 645 Ethical Leadership, I interacted with various ethical theories and principles. Nonetheless, when possible I narrowed my focus and concentrated on the ethical values and behaviors of Micah 6:8, as well as, shared Jewish and

Christian values. As a part of the course work associated with LEAD 645, I wrote weekly forum posts about ethics, various ethical issues and theories.

I also wrote about my learnings from my investigation of Micah 6:8. In addition, as a part of LEAD 645, I produced two-course projects, an Ethical Triad for Children and a paper proposing a Code of Ethics for TMF. I will not specifically address these artifacts; however, if you wish to view and consider these artifacts you may find them in [Competency 1b: Ethics and Spirituality](#) (**Artifact**).

Furthermore, while in LEAD 636: Issues In Leadership Foundations, I continued my study of Micah 6:8 and incorporated some elemental aspects in my philosophical and worldview statements. Likewise, if you wish, you may delve into these two artifacts along with others related to my [Competency 1a: Philosophical Foundations](#) (**Artifact**). Finally, I enrolled in LEAD 756: Advanced Studies: Jewish Ethics, so that I might explore more deeply Jewish ethical values related to Micah 6:8 and its analogous academic theories (**Artifact**: [LEAD 756 Jewish Ethics Course Syllabus](#)).

Social Responsibility Theory

As defined by the Bloomsbury Business Library - Business & Management Dictionary, social responsibility is “the approach of an organization to managing the impact it has on society;” it is predicated upon behavior determined “within certain socially acceptable limits,” that could be expressed by “written laws or regulations” ("Social responsibility," 2007). However, social limits could be based on “an accepted organization-wide moral or ethical code” ("Social responsibility," 2007). If organizations break such codes, they “are viewed as irresponsible” ("Social responsibility," 2007). According to Fisher (2004), Davidson and Griffin

in 2000 defined social responsibility as “[t]he set of obligations an organisation [sic] has to protect and enhance the society in which it functions” (cited in, Fisher, 2004, p. 392).

Likewise, Davidson and Griffin defined ethics as “. . . an individual's personal beliefs regarding what is right and wrong or good or bad" (cited in, Fisher, 2004, p. 392). Johnson (2012) views ethics as referring “to judgments about whether human behavior is right or wrong” (p. xxi). Also, Hughes et al. (2012) consider that ethics are the “principles of right conduct or a system of moral values” (p. 151); whereas, morals are “specific standards of right and wrong” (Johnson, 2012, p. xxi). Judgment means considering something or making a decision about something—ethics concerns our behaviors, what we do, whether it is right or wrong.

Fisher (2004) emphasizes that Davidson and Griffin regard ethical behavior as being relative, and “can vary from person to person; however, it will usually be behaviour [sic] that is consistent with widely accepted social norms” (p. 392).

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

According to the online Cambridge dictionary, corporate social responsibility is “the practice of producing goods and services in a way that is not harmful to society or the environment” (Dictionary.cambridge.org, 2020). Fisher (2004) reports that Schermerhorn in 2002, argued for the shifting of “our interest in ethical behavior from the level of the individual to that of the organization,” and so, she states that Schermerhorn defined corporate social responsibility (CSR) “as an obligation of the organization to act in ways that serve both its own interests and the interests of its many external stakeholders” (cited in, Fisher, 2004, p. 393).

Similarly, Jones (1980) views CSR as “the notion that corporations have an obligation to constituent groups in society other than stock holders and beyond that prescribed by law or union

contract” (pp. 59-60). Likewise, Jones (1980) argues that there are two critical aspects of his CSR definition that need to be considered:

First, the obligation must be voluntarily adopted; behavior influenced by the coercive forces of law or union contract is not voluntary. Second, the obligation is a broad one, extending beyond the traditional duty to shareholders to other societal groups such as customers, employees, suppliers, and neighboring communities (p. 60).

Lastly, Jones (1980) posits, that when considering these matters, “the crux of the conceptual aspect is the question of whether corporations have an obligation to groups other than shareholders” (p. 60).

Herein lies the problem with the theories of social responsibility and CSR. Although not alone in his thinking, Jones (1980) raises the issue of social responsibility as being “too vague to be useful—how can corporate managers decide what behavior is socially responsible” (p. 60)? Fundamentally, he considers it to be “very difficult to reach any consensus as to what constitutes socially responsible behavior,” and moreover, he reasons that “it is virtually impossible to define social responsibility in terms of specific decisions” (p. 65). Consequently, he concludes that “corporate social responsibility ought not be seen as a set of outcomes, but as a process” (p. 65).

Jewish View of Social Responsibility

Communitarianism or caring for community is seen when members of the community “shoulder their responsibility and seek the common good” by sharing concern for “their fellow citizens” (Johnson, 2012, p. 164). Members of the community must in turn care, show concern for or “have significant obligations to their fellow citizens” (Johnson, 2012, p. 164).

Communitarianism is somewhat controversial because it looks at society—what is best for the community and does not consider solely what is best for the needs of the individual.

The communitarianism ethical theory is related to the Jewish understandings of social or collective responsibility. The theory of social responsibility is predicated upon the notion of an

individual's (or organization's) responsibility to act for the greater good of society. What this means is that individuals and organizations are to care for society and address social needs and issues within their midst. More so, these entities have an obligation to act for the greater good of those around them.

Jewish and Christian views of social responsibility flow from the belief that God created humanity and placed men and women on this planet; therefore, he created human beings to live together. In Genesis 2:18, God said, "*It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him*" (NIV, 1984). We live as individuals within a community. Even though we are individuals, not one of us lives alone as if we live on a deserted island. We are surrounded by other people: family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors. Telushkin (2009) connects this understanding with the commandment to "love our neighbor" due to the fact that "*all human beings are created by God*" and for this reason human beings are interrelated as "one extended family" (p. 10).

From the Talmud, we read one of the questions the rabbis raised: "Why, when the world was created, did God create just one man and one woman?" Racelle Weiman (2008), cites their answer: "So that humankind understands that we all come from a single union, to teach us that we are all sisters and brothers, and that no one is greater than any other" (p. 91). The Tanakh asks this question similarly in Malachi 2:10: "Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us?" On this unique sphere—this globe, we live as human beings in community, in a relationship with God and each other.

For this reason, Weiman determines that we share a "common lineage," in which each man and woman "is created in the divine image," and is an acknowledgment of the fact that "God's presence is illuminated in each individual" (p. 91). God reveals his character in every

human being; therefore, every man and woman is equal and worthy of dignity and for this reason we should treat each other as if we matter and as if we love one another.

Jewish people view themselves collectively as one large community in which they care for one another. The Babylonian Talmud teaches “*Kol Yisrael arevim zeh lazeh*” (Shavuot 39a), which means that “All Jews are responsible for one another” (cited in, Telushkin, 1994, p. 91). What this means, from a Jewish perspective, is that we are to be concerned for each other and “care for other people in the same way as we care about ourselves” (Delcau, 2012, p. 9). This connotation best captures the meaning of social responsibility.

Moreover, the Hebrew word for “responsible,” *ah-reivin/areyvut*, “literally means ‘surety,’ one who makes himself responsible for another” (Telushkin, 1994, p. 91). If we are responsible for one another, then we must “be kind and generous to everyone, especially [to] people who do not have as much as we have” (Delcau, 2012, p. 9). In other words, we will act justly toward one another and do the right thing.

Additionally, the Jewish people draw their understanding of social responsibility from the Babylonian Talmud (Ta'anit 11a) where it declares: “When the community is in trouble a person should not say, ‘I will go home and eat and drink and be at peace with myself’” (Telushkin, 1994, p. 94). The implications of this statement for the Jew is to be involved in the distress of the community, as was Moses (Exodus 27:12), “who took upon himself his community’s pain;” the Talmud elaborates further, “one who shares in the distress of a community will merit to witness its deliverance” (Telushkin, 1994, p. 94).

Finally, we may consider the command from the Torah: “Do not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor” (Leviticus 19:16). Jews understand this verse to mean that we should not just stand “idly” by and be observers while something is happening to another person. It is our

obligation to act and do something in order to help. The scriptural command is to be responsible for those around us and not only intervene in the act of murder or violence, but more so, Scripture commands us to be socially responsible and act when someone else is in need.

Summary

The theory of social responsibility is predicated upon the notion of an individual's (or organization's) responsibility to act for the greater good of society. What this means is that individuals and organizations are to care for society and address social needs and issues within their midst. According to Fisher (2004), Davidson and Griffin in 2000 defined social responsibility as "[t]he set of obligations an organisation [sic] has to protect and enhance the society in which it functions" (cited in, Fisher, 2004, p. 392).

Jones (1980) views CSR as "the notion that corporations have an obligation to constituent groups in society other than stock-holders and beyond that prescribed by law or union contract" (pp. 59-60). Jones (1980) raises the issue of social responsibility as being "too vague to be useful—how can corporate managers decide what behavior is socially responsible" (p. 60)? He thinks that would be "very difficult to reach any consensus as to what constitutes socially responsible behavior," and moreover, he reasons that "it is virtually impossible to define social responsibility in terms of specific decisions" (p. 65). Consequently, he concludes that "corporate social responsibility ought not be seen as a set of outcomes, but as a process" (p. 65).

Jewish and Christian views of social responsibility flow from the belief that God created humanity and placed men and women on this planet; therefore, he created human beings to live together. Jewish people view themselves collectively as one large community in which they care for one another. The Babylonian Talmud teaches "*Kol Yisrael arevim zeh lazeh*" (Shavuot 39a), which means that "All Jews are responsible for one another" (cited in, Telushkin, 1994, p. 91).

CHAPTER 2

CONNECTING THEORY TO PRACTICE

As I stated previously, the theory of social responsibility is predicated upon the notion of an individual's (or organization's) responsibility to act for the greater good of society. This means that individuals and organization are to care for society and address social needs and issues within their midst.

I have purposefully led TMF to express its Christian identity and not to hide it as we serve the Jewish community of Polish descent to care for and preserve the Jewish cemeteries of Poland. Likewise, since I have been a participant in the Leadership Program at Andrews University. I have labored to learn by researching and developing a theoretical construct from which to operate, so that TMF to conduct its mission ethically and within the boundary of social responsibility. In this chapter, I will consider how the work of TMF intersects and diverges somewhat with social responsibility and its corporate counterpart.

Practical Theology

First, it is important for me to link academic theory, belief, and practice to the ethical operations of TMF. According to Schneider and Wittberg (2011), "significant research has examined congregational involvement in providing for those in need," while not many

investigations have examined “the denominational theology that informs these initiatives or influences the non-profit systems created to provide them” (p. 405). Although not a denominational entity, TMF is guided by its Christian beliefs and convictions, such as love of neighbor, compassionate acts expressing concern for others, and meeting needs and serving others.

Based on research, obtained from the Faith and Organizations project, Schneider and Wittberg (2011) compared “the practical theology behind stewardship of social welfare and educational programs” among numerous religious groups in North America including “Catholic, Mainline Protestant, Evangelical, Jewish, Quaker, and African American Christian entities” (p. 405). Specifically, they considered how faith-based organizations (FBOs) connected their beliefs to their work in meeting needs in their midst. In other words, they examined these FBOs practice of social responsibility.

Schneider and Wittberg (2011) developed a “working definition of practical theology,” which they define as “[t]he formal and informal mechanisms a faith community uses to enact its theological teachings through its religious culture and structures” (p. 409). Furthermore, they state,

Practical theology includes explicit evidence of faith such as quoting theological statements or scripture, displaying religious symbols, and employing religious-based practices in governance. More often, however, practical theology is less overt, embedded in the culture of FBOs and in the particular nature of the relationship between faith communities and the organizations they have created (p. 409).

Interestingly, Schneider and Wittberg (2011) state that based on the work of Brown in 2007, and Lewis in 2004, Jewish FBOs train their leadership by frequently combining the “study of religious texts with the latest business models on leadership, with few connections between the two topics” (p. 408). Although TMF is not an FBO—it is a public charity as determined by the IRS, led by a group of Christians, what is relevant for me to consider, at this point, is that

there is precedence in connecting belief, theory, and practice in work of TMF. The notion of practical theology is for me a lynchpin allowing me to link academic theories, such as social responsibility, altruism, communitarianism, etc., to my Judeo-Christian worldview and thereby integrate Jewish and Christian values into a common moral framework from which for TMF to operate.

Review of Micah 6:8

I have written extensively elsewhere about the importance of the ethical framework that Micah 6:8 represents in the work of TMF. In the next few paragraphs, I will briefly review Micah 6:8 and its significance.

The prophet Micah wrote, “He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God” (ESV, 2016). Justice, mercy, and humility are the three core values encountered in Micah 6:8. For me personally, Micah 6:8 has become *the* critical outflow of God’s holiness and love in my life. In Micah 6:8, God has encoded the moral standard and behavior pattern for humanity. This pattern is characterized by acting justly, loving mercy and walking humbly before God. Mercy is the key value, and extending loving-kindness expresses the heart of God.

Hyman (2005) states that the rabbis determined that Micah 6:8 “by virtue of its three principles of doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God,” captured the essence of the 613 commandments in the *Halakhah* (p. 157). According to Hyman (2005) the core of Micah 6:8 is based on a tripartite pattern of a simple string of three verbs emphasizing “*doing*, *loving*, and *walking*—connected to three basic moral values—*justice*, *mercy*, and *humility*,” which “make it comprehensible and easy to remember” (p. 164).

According to Wolf (2010), in Matthew 23:23, Jesus Christ positioned “Micah’s moral mark as the central weighty valuation of life” (p. 122). We see in this passage three fundamental values and behaviors for living life: acting justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly. For those, who are Christians—followers of Jesus, this moral link that Jesus made to Micah 6:8 is vital as it bridges Judaic thought and teaching and connects us with the root of Christianity, Judaism.

We learn from Telushkin (2006) that the prophet Micah teaches us that “God’s primary demand of human beings is to act righteously [or justly]” (p. 14). Telushkin expounds and says that God does not require from us sacrifices or religious rituals; “rather, God’s most significant demands are justice, compassion, and humility” (p. 14).

Moral Action

Purpel (2008) asks us to consider the question, underlying Micah 6:8: “What is the moral good and how are we to act morally” (p. 116)? Micah does not actually ask this question; nonetheless, he provides an answer stating that men and women are to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly before God. Such a universal set of moral principles is contested by some and endorsed by others. Stenger (2006) states that even across diverse cultures and beliefs humanity agrees “on a common set of moral standards;” even though differences are evident, he concludes that “universal norms seem to exist” (p. 2).

Purpel raises two issues regarding the practical application of the values and behaviors of Micah 6:8. First, it is possible to work “toward a society permeated with loving-kindness, justice, and humility” (p. 117). Second, some people embrace the basic moral construct of the teaching of Micah “but reject it because it seems impossible to achieve or (even more troubling) because they deny its validity, implicitly or otherwise” (p. 117).

Purpel concludes that although throughout history numerous people generally acknowledge the teachings of Micah 6:8 and those similar to it as being sound and pragmatic moral teachings. Nevertheless, according to him, the evidence suggests that people have been either incapable or reluctant to put these values and behaviors into action concluding that “we have been taught a very good lesson, but we have not learned it very well” (p. 117).

Indispensable Jewish Values Underlying the Work of TMF

In this section, I would briefly consider three critical Jewish ethical values that undergird the work of TMF. These Jewish values uniquely inform and direct me and my leadership of the work of TMF in being socially responsible by caring for and restoring Jewish cemeteries in Poland. Where appropriate I will expound upon these values and link them to my life and TMF’s work.

Chesed Shel Emet

Why is caring for the Jewish cemeteries of Poland important? To a Jew, and based on the Torah, caring for the dead is one of the highest expressions of love because the dead cannot repay you for your kindness shown to them. This type of care (love) is one of the highest expressions of true mercy or loving-kindness as expressed in Hebrew by *chesed shel emet* meaning literally “kindness of truth.” We understand this concept best by what we may call *mercy*. The Jewish understanding of loving-kindness is derived from God, who gave them the pre-eminent example of what loving-kindness looks like when he buried Moses (Deuteronomy 34:5-6).

Since the Shoah decimated 3.5 million Polish Jews, there are very few descendants currently remaining in Poland to care for the 1,200 Jewish cemeteries. Estimates place the

number of Jews today in Poland at roughly 20,000 and, at the most 30,000 people; therefore caring for these cemeteries is an overwhelming task. Nevertheless, for Jews, according to Norman Weinberg (2005, para. 11),

Jewish cemetery restoration in Poland is about remembering and honoring the dead and those murdered during the Holocaust. It is doing what the murdered cannot do: caring for their sacred sites. We must do this for them. It is among the greatest of mitzvot, because they cannot thank us. And it is an obligation.

Furthermore, Weinberg (2007) asserts that for Jews caring for “their ancestral cemeteries is not only a religious obligation but [it is] considered amongst the greatest of mitzvot (good deeds)” (para. 2).

Gemilut Chasadim/Gemilut Chesed

When considering the burial of the dead *gemilut chasadim*, or acts of loving-kindness, is viewed as “par excellence because it necessarily is done without any hope that the ‘recipient’ will repay the good deed” (Telushkin, 1994, p. 25). Furthermore, Telushkin (1994) indicates that a rabbi, Haffetz Hayyim, considered *gemilut chasadim* as “any good deed that one does for another without getting something in return (*Ahavat Chesed*)” (p. 25).

We see that this Jewish ethical consideration of mercy is mirrored in altruism. However, the Jewish concept of *gemilut chasadim/gemilut chesed* expresses a much deeper concern for those around us through acts of loving-kindness. Telushkin (2001) explains that *gemilut chesed* “usually refers to a special type of *mitzvah*, one that is performed with no expectation of reward” (p. 596). Telushkin goes on to elaborate the subtle difference albeit major difference between these two concepts by explaining that a good deed “implies a voluntary act,” while commandment infers “an obligatory” act (p. 553). Telushkin clarifies this difference by stating that Western cultures view voluntary acts “to be on a higher plane than an obligatory one;”

however, the Talmud (*Kiddushin 31a*) considers this issue differently: “Greater is he who is commanded and carries out an act, than he who is not commanded, and carries it out” (p. 553).

Deeds of loving-kindness lay the bridge of mercy and allows us to connect with the people who have suffered an injustice. It is a way for us, as TMF, to enter into the Jewish world as Christians and build a bridge of mercy, caring through a *mitzvah*—a “good deed” required by the Torah. For this reason, TMF can enter into this specific *mitzvah* and thereby remember, as Weinberg (2007) declares, “the millions murdered in the Shoah,” and for “their unborn children, who would have been caring for their cemeteries” (para. 2) in Poland.

Tikkun Olam

In redemptions, God acts to redeem his creation. Restoration is a concept in which something becomes “corrupt and is restored to a new condition” (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 196). Ultimately according to Scripture, redemption is found in Christ Jesus; nevertheless, in Judaism, we find that Jews reject “the messianic claims of Jesus” (Anderson, 2014, p. 68).

Jews do not acknowledge the redemptive work of Christ as being God’s redemption. Even so, in Judaism, we see the concept of restoration (a form of redemption), which is known as *Tikkun Olam*—restoring, restorative works, healing, which literally means in Hebrew “repair of the world” (Sucharov, 2011, p. 172). In contemporary times, Sucharov (2011) contends, “*Tikkun Olam* has come to connote an ethical outlook by which we strive to create a better world” (p. 174). Furthermore, he reasons that restorative work or repair is viewed as “a process that extends beyond the bounds of the dyadic [interaction of two people] field to include the surrounding world context” (p. 175).

TMF understands the Jewish concept of *Tikkun Olam* and works toward restoring Jewish cemeteries as a means to redeem them, honor them, and thereby bring back the memory of Jews

and their 1,000 year history in Poland. We redeem the memory and honor of the lives of those who no longer walk the earth. By our actions therefore, we honor God and the Jewish people through whom God has revealed himself to us, as the Jewish people are the root, the origin of everything that we know about God. Recall what the Apostle Paul admonished us in Romans 11:18 concerning our Jewish roots: “You do not support the root, but the root supports you” (NIV, 1984).

Considerations for Organizational Ethics

As the president of TMF, my goal is to better understand the nature of ethical leadership and to shape our organizational ethics so that they reflect Jewish and Christian understanding of what it means to love and care for the needs of others. In a sense, this is our social responsibility as an organization, comprised of Christians, to speak to the injustice of the Shoah today and thereby open a dialogue with the Jewish community primarily of Polish descent. It is important therefore to consider that any organization or group of individuals wishing to act accordingly must do so ethically.

Ethical Agents

One of the issues associated with social responsibility, especially CSR, is the question of ethical or moral obligations. Are corporations individuals? Organizations are comprised of people. Consequently, Johnson (2012) argues that “ethics is at the heart of leadership” and when individuals decide to become leaders, they “assume the ethical responsibilities that come with that role” (p. 318). Citing scandals in the corporate and non-profit worlds, such as Enron, Fannie Mae, ACORN, United Way, etc., Johnson (2012) concludes that despite these negative

occurrences, when seen positively “leaders are largely responsible for creating the organizations that we admire for their ethical behavior” (p. 318).

Since people have the capacity to make ethical and unethical decisions, organizations have the same capacity to make decisions. Likewise, leaders shape the ethics of the organizations that they lead either positively or negatively. In 2004, Trevino, Brown and others made a distinction “between ethical leaders and those who are unethical, hypocritical or ethically neutral” (cited in, Johnson, 2012, p. 318). Furthermore, Johnson (2012) states, “The *unethical leader* falls short as both a moral person and a moral influence agent,” and as such, unethical leaders “clearly communicate that ethics don’t matter; only results do” (p. 318).

Moreover, organizations are ethical agents because they are frequently organized by individuals who act morally to express their values and visions of what is needed in the world around them. In brief, when individuals express their values and interact with the world around them they are engaging in socially responsible behavior.

Thus, organizations may be agents of good or evil depending upon the good and evil that each member brings to the structuring and the development of the organization’s purpose. Since people have the capacity to make ethical and unethical decisions, organizations share the same capacity to make these types of decisions and therefore can act for good or evil. As a moral and ethical agent leading TMF, I will lead our organization to act morally and ethically, which means ultimately, we will act in such a way to be socially responsible.

Ethical Climate

All organizations have ethical climates that may be categorized into one of five ethical means of operating as described by Victor and Cullen (cited in, Johnson, 2012, p. 320). First, they can be instrumental and be driven by a leader or a group’s ego and selfish interests, which

leads to a pattern of decision making that is self-serving and based on the needs of an individual, a select group or the organization itself. The organization may next be caring and have an ethical climate that emphasizes concern or care for others. Third, organizations may be centered on law and order, in which the ethical climate is characterized by code of conduct, and fourth, organizations may be driven by rules that govern the ethical environment by policy, rules and regulations. Lastly, ethical organizations may reflect an ethical environment of independence allowing people to have broad ranging freedom to make their own decisions.

Ethical Performance

Organizations must be aware of their ethical performance as Victor and Cullen point out further that "the greatest threat to ethical performance" is "self-interest" (cited in, Johnson, 2012, p. 320). This conclusion supports the fact that people can negatively impact the ethic of the organization that they lead by promoting their own self need and placing it ahead of the organization or those whom the organization serves. In consideration of these five ethical climates, I think that TMF operates from a caring ethical perspective in which we express concern and care of victims of the Shoah. As Christians, we desire to join and serve Jews by celebrating, who God is and who He created us to be through the mitzvah of caring for Jewish Cemeteries in Poland.

Finally, it is important to note that organizations can also have a "dark side" (Johnson, 2012, p. 325) and consequently can be like people. Organizations can be uncivil and practice incivility by being discourteous, disregarding and being rude to others. They can create practices that treat employees abusively and they can also be careless, creating a culture that allows for abusive practices such as sexual harassment, discrimination and harsh and disrespectful treatment of employees and they can be irresponsible to their stockholders.

TMF Code of Ethics

As a safeguard against such unethical deficiencies and to ensure a healthy ethical climate, organizations can create and adhere to ethical values or a code of ethics. Additionally, organizations can also enact federal guidelines in financial management. These actions would include compliance with IRS recommendations, along with other guidelines for operating the organization with integrity. As a group of Christians, we can operate TMF in a manner that agrees with the Apostle Peter's recommendation in I Peter 2:12: "Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us" (NIV, 1984).

In a Harvard Business Review article, Paine and Bettcher (2005) report that under the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, public companies that issue securities "must disclose whether they have adopted a code [of ethics] for their senior executives" (p. 1). On the other hand, Winsten (2012) indicates,

[Although the Sarbanes-Oxley Act} was not drafted to cover tax-exempt organizations . . . certain provisions within the law and its approach have found their way into IRS proposals and suggestions to ensure greater transparency and accountability for tax-exempt organizations (para. 4).

Moreover, Paine and Bettcher (2005) assert that these considerations are more than legal requirements as there are universal appeals for defining "corporate standards of conduct" (p. 1). What is apparent from these developments is that defining and clarifying corporate standards of conduct for TMF is desirable.

Even though TMF is not legally obligated to have a code of ethics, the IRS may eventually require one to maintain the tax-exempt status of the organization. Paine and Bettcher (2005) enumerate eight ethical principles, which they designate as the "Global Business Standard Codex" (GBS Codex), as a way to create or appraise an ethical code of conduct. The eight

principles are The Fiduciary Principle, The Property Principle, The Reliability Principle, The Transparency Principle, The Dignity Principle, The Fairness Principle, The Citizenship Principle, and The Responsiveness Principle (p. 3).

Based on the research that I outlined in the above paragraphs, I wrote a code of ethics for TMF, which I presented to the board in March 2013 (**Artifact:** [TMF Values](#) and [TMF Code of Ethics](#)). The board of TMF approved and adopted my proposal as TMF's Code of Ethics (**Verification:** [2013 March Minutes for TMF Board Meeting](#)), and the code of ethics was posted on TMF's website until the website was revised in 2019 (**Verification:** [TMF Website Code of Ethics](#)).

Summary

The theory of social responsibility is predicated upon the notion of an individual's (or organization's) responsibility to act for the greater good of society. Consequently, individuals and organization are to care for society and address social needs and issues within their midst. More so, these entities have an obligation to act for the greater good of those around them. I have purposefully led TMF to express its Christian identity and not to hide it as we serve the Jewish community of Polish descent to care for and preserve the Jewish cemeteries of Poland. Schneider and Wittberg (2011) developed a "working definition of practical theology," which they define as "The formal and informal mechanisms a faith community uses to enact its theological teachings through its religious culture and structures" (p. 409).

TMF operates ethically via a set of values derived principally from Micah 6:8 and several key Jewish ethical and moral values. The values of justice, mercy, and humility seen in Micah 6:8 form a moral template, and capture the essence of the 613 commandments in the *Halakhah*, as Hyman (2005, p. 157) indicates. Furthermore, these values are deeply embedded into the

ethical heart of TMF. Remembering, restoring, and reconciling flow from this ethical triad of Micah 6:8, and along with the Jewish values of *chesed shel emet*, *gemilut chassidim*, and *Tikkun Olam* form the moral and ethical framework of TMF.

Consequently, through this prism of values, TMF has learned to care and act in a manner that is congruent with these Jewish ethical values. Accordingly, we labor to connect Jews of Polish descent with their past and seek to unite, literally reconcile the Jewish and Christian communities by way of a common mitzvah. In so doing, we connect these two diverse religious groups allowing them to partner in Jewish cemetery restoration projects in Poland. By working together we honor the past, touch the present and impact the future.

CHAPTER 3

KEY LEARNINGS AND SERVING OTHERS

Two-fold Mission of TMF

As a non-profit organization, TMF is considered a public charity by the IRS (**Artifact:** [TMF IRS Determination Letter](#)). The two-fold mission of TMF is to educate the public about the Shoah and to care for and restore Jewish cemeteries in Poland (**Artifacts:** [TMF Certified Articles of Incorporation](#) and [TMF Vision Mission Statements](#)).

Educating the Public about the Shoah

One of the two core missions of TMF is to educate the public about the Shoah; therefore, education and learning are outflows of service for me into the community where we reside and beyond. I have covered this research elsewhere; however, Mezirow (1978) contends that “certain challenges and dilemmas of adult life” may not be resolved through a normal course of action such as “learning more” about the problem or “how to cope with them more effectively” (p. 101). Resolving issues, such as “life crises,” requires reevaluation and development “in which familiar assumptions are challenged, and new directions and commitments are charted” (p. 101). Such a reassessment is accomplished “through critical analysis of the assumptions behind the roles we play,” and possibly lead “to successive levels of self-development” (p. 101). The

transformation of perspective could also guide people “to explore new life options” and “begin again” (p. 102).

From Mezirow’s theoretical framework, I considered how I might begin to change Jewish and Christian’s perspectives of each other through examining the events of the Shoah together. In early 2014, Rabbi Peter Berg invited me to lead an orientation session for members of his congregation going to Poland on a short-term cultural and educational tour. I prepared an orientation guide for Polish history and culture and prepared a brief learning encounter (**Artifacts:** [Orientation Polish History](#) and [Culture and Orientation for Printing](#)). I asked Peter for feedback regarding both the orientation guide and my talk. Peter stated, “[It was] a truly inspiring presentation that will help us greatly. It was meaningful for me and I know it was for our participants as well” (**Evaluation:** [RE Appreciation and Request](#)).

Holocaust Seminar

As a part of developing my knowledge base and demonstrate my competency in Competency 5a: The Shoah and its Impact, in February 2016, I enrolled in an online, two part introductory course via Coursera.org and taught by Tel Aviv University and Yad Vashem course. I earned two course certificates as a result of my coursework (**Verifications:** [Coursera Holocaust I Course Certificate](#) and [Coursera Holocaust II Course Certificate](#)).

Following the completion of the coursework, I contacted a local rabbi that I have known since 2012, Rabbi Peter Berg, and asked him if he would be interested in a Holocaust seminar led by a Christian and a Jew (**Artifact:** [Holocaust Seminar Idea](#)). Rabbi Berg agreed. My friend, Jan Jaben-Eilon, and I contacted the Rabbi Steven Rau, the educational director at The Temple, to begin preparations (**Artifact:** [Re Holocaust Education](#)). We worked out the details and scheduled the Holocaust seminar to begin in the spring of 2017.

Over the next year, Jan and I developed the course syllabus around the idea of voices of the Holocaust (**Artifact:** [Syllabus Jewish and Christian Perspectives of the Holocaust](#)). We constructed the seminar around five voices: Jewish life in Poland before WWII, Christian Poles in prewar Poland, the Holocaust, current Christians associated with Poland, and Polish Jews and the rebirth of Jewish life in Poland.

I produced two Power Point Presentations about the Holocaust, which we used to guide the discussion during the third seminar (**Artifacts:** [Voices of the Holocaust PART 1](#) and [Voices of the Holocaust PART 2](#)). I shared what I was learning along the way with the board of TMF and sought their feedback (**Verifications:** [RE_Shoah](#), [Re_Shoah_2](#), and [RE_Shoah_3](#)). Lastly, following the seminar, I asked Jan to evaluate how I led the seminar (**Evaluation:** [Evaluation Jan](#) and [Evaluation Jan 2019](#)).

Based on what I learned from these experiences, I will use this material, or adapt it in some way to be used to further engage both the Jewish and Christian communities in learning about the Shoah.

Public Speaking

As a public servant, I am invited from time to time to speak about the work of TMF in various venues, which are primarily Jewish. It is in these public spaces that I can speak about the work of TMF and engage people in perspective transformation along with challenging the status quo of Jewish and Christian interaction.

In fall of 2018, John Liffiton of Scottsdale Community College (SCC) invited me to present at the 7th Annual Genocide Awareness Week, on April 19, 2019 at SCC (**Artifact:** [SCC Genocide Awareness Invitation](#) and [SCC Genocide Conf Brochure](#)). Liffiton is founder-director of what he says, “has become the largest genocide conference with about 2,800 attending just the

lectures and 8-10k attending the educational exhibits.” For my presentation, I prepared a PowerPoint Presentation, which I titled [The Shoah and its Aftermath: Speaking for Those, Who Have No Voice Today](#) (**Artifact**).

About 60 people attended my presentation. I spoke for roughly 30 minutes. Following my presentation, I led a Q&A session with participants, which lasted about an hour and a half. Mr. Liffiton presented me with a certificate of appreciation and I received a follow-up email from one of the participants thanking me for my work. (**Verifications:** [2019 SCC Genocide Awareness Conf Certificate](#) and [SCC Feedback](#)).

The Vision of Chaim’s House

JoAnn Siegienski (an officer of TMF) and I met Haim Chorowitz in July 2016 during our work in the Oświęcim Jewish cemetery. Haim is an Israeli, whose parents survived the WWII and the Shoah and immigrated to Israel following the war. He invited us to see his family’s home, which was miraculously returned to him by the Polish government. At the property, he told us about his grandfather—his mother’s father, who was a baker and who had a bakery not far from this house. Haim told us how the Nazis executed his grandfather along with two other relatives and four other Jewish men. The Germans hung these Jewish men for baking bread in the Chrzanów Ghetto in April 1942. Haim told our group that he did not wish to sell the home but to use it for some noble purpose to honor the memory of his family, who perished during the Shoah.

When I heard these words from Haim, I wondered what if TMF took on such a project? I learned later that JoAnn had the same thought and we jointly began to dream about a learning and educational center in which we could honor Haim’s wishes by teaching about the Shoah experientially through restoring Jewish cemeteries and equipping others to join us in such work.

JoAnn wrote up our ideas (**Artifact:** [Chaims House v2](#)). The idea of “Chaim’s House” crystalizes our vision of the future, which we wish to pursue. “Chaim” in Hebrew means life. At its core, Chaim’s House is an educational initiative designed to identify, equip, and multiply leaders, who can work beyond TMF to care for and restore the more than 1,200 Jewish cemeteries in Poland.

I cannot unpack everything that we have done, as an organization, over the past four years regarding the development of this project, but I will summarize a few key steps. First of all the board approved the proposal of Chaim’s House at our October 2017 board meeting (**Verification:** [2017 October TMF Minutes](#)). In April 2018, I worked with Haim once more regarding the matter of the hanging of his grandfather. At his request, I attended a meeting between him and the mayor of Chrzanów regarding the movement of the monument at the location of his grandfather’s hanging. I was the translator. Haim and I had many conversations about the experience, which he later wrote and thanked me (**Artifact:** [Thank you](#)). I shared Haim’s heartfelt and touching email with our board (**Verification:** [Jo Re Thank you](#)).

While in Poland and during one of my last discussions with Haim, I introduced the idea of Chaim’s House and told him that I would forward to him our rough idea and proposal (**Verification:** [RE Thank you 4-17](#)). Later in August 2018 when I returned to Oświęcim, I shared the idea of Chaim’s House with local partners and asking for their input regarding how to go about such an endeavor and I also met with Haim (**Verification:** [Third Quarter Report 2018](#)—in first section: Relationships, Meetings, and Speaking, Numbers 5, 6, and 7). Everyone including Haim is supportive of the idea and sees the need for Chaim’s House. Realizing it, on the other hand, is the challenge.

In January 2019, an opportunity arose through Rabbi Yehoshua Ellis, who introduced me

to the possibility of working with a German representative to the German Parliament, who had approached him about the Germany working with the Jewish community in developing an educational initiative to preserve Jewish heritage. I sent to Rabbi Ellis a refined revision of Chaim's House via an email, which included a mind map of how I envisioned linking Chaim's House with what we were collectively doing in Jewish cemeteries (**Artifacts:** [Mind Map Chaims House](#) and [An Idea](#)). Although we have not yet discussed this idea face-to-face, Rabbi Ellis thinks that the idea of Chaim's House is something that we should pursue (**Verification:** [RE An Idea](#)).

Clearly, we may never realize the vision of Chaim's House, but we are pursuing it and exploring avenues concerning how the idea might become a reality. In reflecting, I recall what Elaine, a board member, wrote to me in an email following my update on my meeting with Haim in April 2018. She stated, "What an almost seemingly 'textbook' model of how we would hope much of our work would progress—to quote you 'in true righteousness'" (**Evaluation:** [RE FW Chrzanów Update](#)). There is no textbook for what we are doing. However, keeping in view the principles outlined above along with mentoring and multiplication have given me a few theoretical principles to put in practice. In my response to Elaine, I wrote, "It is God, who leads me/us and I rely upon him to show me the way in all humility and in fear and trembling."

Caring for and Restoring Jewish Cemeteries in Poland

Recall, that along with a group of my Christian friends, I established TMF in late 2010 as a 501 (C)(3) non-profit corporation. TMF began humbly and did not actually conduct its first Jewish cemetery restoration project until the summer of 2012 in one location with two Jewish partner organizations. Since 2012, the work of TMF has steadily grown and developed to the point that in the summer of 2020, we will conduct eleven Jewish cemetery restoration or

commemoration projects in Poland. TMF is now cooperating with more than 11 Jewish and non-Jewish organizations and partners with local governments, community organizations, and hundreds of volunteers to carry out its mission.

Jewish Cemetery Projects

In 2020, TMF is celebrating its tenth year of service. Recently, I wrote a brief article about TMF's first nine years of operation in TMF's 2019 Year End Newsletter (**Artifact:** [The Matzevah Foundation 2019 Year End Report](#)). In my reflection, I captured how we go about organizing and coordinating our work with seven board members and three primary volunteers.

Additionally, I explained the cyclical nature of our operations and how we gather information, consider, plan, develop, and implement our projects annually. I referred to our [volunteer recruitment](#) process, which includes an [application](#) and FAQs (**Artifact**). I also included how we handle [project inquiries](#) (**Artifact**). Both of these processes have grown out of the necessity to develop our volunteer process and to handle project inquiries.

First, volunteers who approach us through our website are vetted and reviewed. Volunteer applicants must submit an application and references. We have a team who reviews each applicant and their references. Once the review process is complete, one of our board members will interview the applicant and make a recommendation to the board as to whether to select the volunteer applicant or not. If the applicant is approved, they select one of our projects and we begin the volunteer orientation process (**Artifact:** [Orientation Polish History](#) and a revised version, [Orientation and Culture May 2019](#)).

Second, concerning project inquiries, we typically have a high volume of Jewish cemetery project inquiries, so we have developed a project selection process that includes a general query response (**Artifact:** [RE Matzevah Foundation project selection](#)). Most Jewish

cemetery project queries come to us by word of mouth, or via our website through a special email address, contact@matzevah.org. TMF uses three primary criteria by which we assess any potential Jewish cemetery restoration project. We concentrate our selection efforts on projects that meet the following criteria:

1. Projects that involve the community in and around the Jewish cemetery
2. Projects that allow us to partner with Jewish individuals and/or organizations
3. Projects that involve education

TMF is organizing 11 projects across Poland in 2020: nine Jewish cemetery restoration projects and two mass grave commemoration projects (**Verification:** [2020 Project Grid](#)).

Jewish Cemetery Project Evaluation and Feedback

Before 2016, TMF had conducted no more than three Jewish cemetery restoration projects in Poland during the summer. Project evaluation was carried out in our fall board meetings. Beginning in 2016, the number of projects grew to six and we determined to develop a way to evaluate our work in the field. At first we used word documents for each project; however, the project evaluations were not centralized and easily accessible (**Evaluation:** [Markuszów - July 2016 Final Report](#)). In 2017, we shifted to using Google Docs and then in 2018 we produced a standardized form for evaluating projects (**Evaluation:** [Wawolnica 2018 Recap](#)). We continue to use this reporting and evaluation system for each project (**Verifications:** [Przerośl 2019 Project Report](#), and [Czestochowa 2019 Project Report](#)).

Since 2015, we have collected volunteer feedback, or testimonials from select volunteers (**Verification:** [Volunteer Testimonials](#)). We have discussed but not yet developed a standardized evaluation form or mechanism for volunteer feedback and evaluations. I will share a few

examples of the types of volunteer feedback and evaluations that we have received over the past few years. In 2016 during the Nasielsk Project, Kasia Sosnowska made a short [YouTube video](#) (**Artifact**) about our work. Jay Osborn wrote a very detailed evaluation of our work in Nasielsk in a blog post on Rohatyn Jewish Heritage (**Evaluation:** [Nasielsk Cemetery Clearing with The Matzevah Foundation](#)), which was later shared in a post on [Jewish Heritage Europe](#).

Additionally, I asked Glenn Kurtz, the lead descendant of the Nasielsk descendant's group, to share with me his reflection of the work (**Verifications:** [Markuszów - July 2016 Final Report](#)). In 2019, Hatte Blejer and Hank Mishkoff shared on Facebook their feedback for the Przerośl project (**Verification:** [Przerośl 2019 Project Report](#)—please see section: Meaningful Outcomes).

JewishGen Future Scholars Program

In 2019, TMF entered into a collaborative partnership with [JewishGen](#) and [Friends of Jewish Heritage in Poland](#) in the [2019 JewishGen Future Scholars Program](#) (**Artifact:** [TMF Intro Packet JewishGen 05 13 SDR](#)), and in 2020, we are continuing our collective partnership in the [2020 JewishGen Future Scholars Program](#). If you are interested in learning more about this project, you may follow the above links. I would like to share two evaluations or assessments of the project from a Jewish perspective.

First, Rivka Schiller wrote a reflection paper about her experience (**Evaluation:** [Notes regarding my JewishGen Trip](#)). Rivka catalogued her experience and described her interaction with TMF. I will quote one relevant section in which she commented about working with Przemek Panasiuk, TMF Project Coordinator for Poland, and me:

Again, when I think of Steven and Przemek, the term “Righteous Gentile” immediately leaps to mind. For as Steven – a native of Texas with a heavy Texan drawl, conveyed – the cemetery restoration work is not his “rodeo,” but rather that of us Jews, who have a direct

obligation to care for our own dead, and for the eternal resting grounds of Jews who are sadly no longer in our midst. Thus, for Steven and Przemek, their physical labor in these Jewish cemeteries is without doubt an altruistic act – and something that I am still attempting to fully grasp and sort out within my own mind. As such, I am truly inspired to have met Steven and worked under his guidance and direction. I only wish that more people – Jews, especially – knew about the Matzevah Foundation and supported it.

Second, Dan Oren, project co-leader and CEO of [Friends of Jewish Heritage in Poland](#), wrote an evaluation of logistical lessons learned from the 2019 JewishGen Future Scholars Program (**Evaluation:** [Dan Oren Lessons Learned](#)). I will share one relevant section below:

Ideally the site of cemetery work needs to have relatively easy access to kosher meal supply. While we succeeded in providing a hot (and delicious) dinner each night associated with the cemetery clean-up, the food logistics proved complex in many ways (transporting food to the lodging, arranging for sufficient refrigerator and freezer space, arranging for an available oven for cooking) and preparing for daily breakfasts and pack-out lunches. If possible, choosing a cemetery location with a 30-minute driving distance of Warsaw, Lublin, Tarnów, Kraków, or Łódź would be ideal in order to permit evening hot meals to be catered. Depending on The Matzevah Foundation schedule, this may not be possible, again supporting the value of scheduling the project as early as possible.

I share this reflection to illustrate the complexity of working with Orthodox Jews. Keeping Kosher or Kashrut, is complex in Poland; nonetheless, it can be done, which opens the way for TMF increasingly to engage Orthodox Jewish descendant's groups in the future.

International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance

Beginning in 2016 and in partnership with Staffordshire University (UK), the Rabbinical Commission for Matters of Cemeteries, Fundacja Zapomniane, and The Matzevah Foundation participated in a three-year [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance](#) (IHRA), [IHRA Grant-funded Project](#) (**Verification**) to document Holocaust killing sites and cultural genocide occurring in Jewish cemeteries in Poland. More than 30 cemeteries in the regions of Oswiecim and Lublin were surveyed and of these, four Jewish cemeteries were selected for further examination. Research was conducted in the Oswiecim, Jewish cemetery in 2016 (**Artifacts:**

[2016 IHRA Regional Survey TMF Report](#), [Reece YouTube Interview](#), and [Recording Cultural Genocide and Killing Sites in Jewish Cemeteries](#)).

The scope of the Oswiecim project was to pinpoint and record the location of the matzevot within the cemetery confines and to record the data found within the inscriptions upon each matzevah. TMF worked with Staffordshire University staff and students to clear the cemetery of undergrowth, erect matzevah fragments in concrete bases, and recover matzevah fragments. Additionally, TMF installed a gravel path in order to connect the front sidewalk with a sidewalk leading to an *ohel* (burial chamber for a wise rabbi) at the rear of the cemetery.

In 2017, the team continued their study and examined the Jewish cemeteries in Piaski, Wąwolnica, and Chrzanów. The findings from our research were made public for the first time on June 5, 2019 in Oswiecim, where Dr. Colls presented the overall findings from the study. I presented the role of TMF in the project (**Verification:** [Szoah i jej poklosie](#) ([English Outline](#))). At that time, Dr. Colls and I released the Final Report on the project's website: [Recording Cultural Genocide and Killing Sites in Jewish Cemeteries](#) (**Verification**).

Finally, I asked Dr. Colls to evaluate my role and contributions to the project. I will quote her below (**Evaluation:** [Ref Letter for Steven](#)),

[We put] together an application for funding to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) for a project entitled "Recording Cultural Genocide and Killing Sites in Jewish Cemeteries". This bid was successful and resulted in us undertaking two seasons of collaborative fieldwork in Poland during which my students had the opportunity to work alongside Steven and his team to research and restore a number of Jewish cemeteries. My students benefited hugely from Steven's expertise but also from his excellent communication skills and ability to inspire debate. During the project, we hosted a number of discussion groups to allow students and volunteers to consider issues surrounding the work we were doing. Steven offered a number of thought-provoking questions for the group to consider and provided valuable input within the discussions. All of my students commented on how much they enjoyed working with Steven and how he had pushed them to think outside the realms of their discipline and knowledge base due to the way he communicated with them. They enjoyed his supervisory style and the fact that he was so open with them about his own experiences, as well as being interested to hear about theirs.

Conclusion

TMF is a non-profit corporation that is classified as a public charity by the IRS. I have led the board of directors to consider our social responsibility to those whom we serve—our Jewish and Christian constituency, in caring for and restoring the Jewish cemeteries of Poland. For nearly ten years, I have passed on what I learned regarding social responsibility and ethics to the board and volunteers who work closely with TMF, so that as a group of individuals and as an organization we could link our biblical values and academic theories with our work.

Since we enter the Jewish space of the Jewish cemetery in Poland, we must understand and act within the framework of beliefs, practices, and ethics. Micah 6:8 is a critical construct for to do justice, love mercifully, and to walk humbly in our service. TMF, as an organization, is comprised of people. Consequently, Johnson (2012) argues that “ethics is at the heart of leadership” and when individuals decide to become leaders, they “assume the ethical responsibilities that come with that role” (p. 318). As a moral and ethical agent leading TMF, I will lead our organization to act morally and ethically, which means ultimately, we will act in such a way to be socially responsible.

I think that when considering the two-fold mission of TMF of educating the public about the Shoah and caring for and restoring Jewish cemeteries in Poland, those involved with TMF are being socially responsible. We are involved in Holocaust education, speaking publicly, and desiring to discover a way to develop and expand our educational impact as an organization. TMF has developed a pathway for engaging and equipping volunteers for its work, and it has sought the input of these volunteers to improve its work. The types of Jewish cemetery restoration projects are diverse engaging students and educators to speak to the injustices of the Shoah today.

Documentation of Competency

Artifacts

1. [TMF IRS Determination Letter](#)
2. [TMF Certified Articles of Incorporation](#)
3. [TMF Vision Mission Statements](#)
4. [Reece SWBTS Transcript](#)
5. [Kosovo Discovery 2000](#)
6. [KFOR Badge](#)
7. [Project Nehemiah](#)
8. [Competencies 5a: The Shoah and its Impact, and 5b: Jewish Ethics](#)
9. [Competency 1b: Ethics and Spirituality](#)
10. [LEAD 756 Jewish Ethics Course Syllabus](#)
11. [TMF Values](#)
12. [TMF Code of Ethics](#)
13. [Orientation Polish History](#)
14. [Culture and Orientation for Printing](#)
15. [Holocaust Seminar Idea](#)
16. [Re Holocaust Education](#)
17. [Syllabus Jewish and Christian Perspectives](#)
18. [Voices of the Holocaust PART 1](#)
19. [Voices of the Holocaust PART 2](#)
20. [SCC Genocide Awareness Invitation](#)
21. [SCC Genocide Conf Brochure](#)
22. [The Shoah and its Aftermath: Speaking for Those, Who Have No Voice Today](#)
23. [Chaims House v2](#)
24. [Thank you](#)
25. [Mind Map Chaims House](#)
26. [An Idea](#)
27. [The Matzevah Foundation 2019 Year End Report](#)
28. [Volunteer Recruitment](#)
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30. [Project Inquiries](#)
31. [RE Matzevah Foundation project selection](#)
32. [Orientation and Culture May 2019](#)
33. [YouTube video](#)
34. [TMF Intro Packet JewishGen_05_13_SDR](#)
35. [2016 IHRA Regional Survey TMF Report](#)
36. [Reece YouTube Interview](#)
37. [Recording Cultural Genocide and Killing Sites in Jewish Cemeteries](#)

Verifications and Evaluations

1. [2013 March Minutes for TMF Board Meeting](#)
2. [TMF Website Code of Ethics](#)
3. [RE Appreciation and Request](#)
4. [Holocaust I Course Certificate](#)
5. [Holocaust II Course Certificate](#)
6. [RE Shoah](#)
7. [Re Shoah_2](#)
8. [RE Shoah_3](#)
9. [Evaluation Jan](#)
10. [Evaluation Jan 2019](#)
11. [2019 SCC Genocide Awareness Conf Certificate](#)
12. [SCC Feedback](#)
13. [2017 October TMF Minutes](#)
14. [Jo Re Thank you](#)
15. [RE Thank you 4-17](#)
16. [Third Quarter Report 2018](#)
17. [RE An Idea](#)
18. [RE FW Chrzanów Update](#)
19. [2020 Project Grid](#)
20. [Markuszów - July 2016 Final Report](#)
21. [Wawolnica 2018 Recap](#)
22. [Przerośl 2019 Project Report](#)
23. [Czestochowa 2019 Project Report](#)
24. [Volunteer Testimonials](#)
25. [Nasielsk Cemetery Clearing with The Matzevah Foundation](#)
26. [Jewish Heritage Europe](#)
27. [Re A Paragraph about Your Experience](#)
28. [Notes regarding my JewishGen Trip](#)
29. [Dan Oren Lessons Learned](#)
30. [IHRA Grant-funded Project](#)
31. [Szoah i jej poklosie \(English Outline\)](#)
32. [Recording Cultural Genocide and Killing Sites in Jewish Cemeteries](#)
33. [Ref Letter for Steven](#)

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