

COMPETENCY 5A, 5B—THE SHOAH AND JEWISH ETHICS

Andrews University
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A Combined Reflection Paper for Competency 5a: The Shoah and its Impact, and
Competency 5b: Jewish Ethics

Pursuant to the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in Leadership

by

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Introduction

I am a committed follower of Jesus Christ and an ordained Baptist minister. 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 especially interested in the history of Poland 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 tasked 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 leading TMF, I have been developing diligently and deepening critically regarding my understanding of the Shoah and its impact along with dealing with cross-cultural issues relating to Jewish and Christian interactions. As such, I have been examining my underlying ethical framework, as well as, my philosophical, and worldview assumptions. My purpose in writing this paper is to connect academic theory to my practice and thereby develop a better historical understanding of the Shoah, and Jewish ethics and history and ethics relate to and shape my task of leading and guiding the work of TMF.

CHAPTER 1

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Rationale for Combined Reflection Paper for Competencies 5a and 5b

Prior to entering the Leadership Program at Andrews University, I had no formal classroom or academic education regarding the history of the Shoah and its moral impact on Jews of Polish origins. I have, however, read numerous books on the topic and participated in several seminars as a translator. Consequently, during live workshops, I translated from Polish to English, for English speaking participants, concepts and materials presented by Polish-Jewish experts in the field of history and matters concerning religious practices associated with the Jewish cemeteries of Poland.

In seminary, the first formal course I took in ethics was Basic Christian Ethics (CNETH 431—SWBTS, 4 hours); the course dealt with essential Christian ethics (**Artifact:** [Reece SWBTS Transcript](#)). My seminary education along with my training and pastoral experience have worked together significantly to shape my ethics, values, and spirituality. 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:** [Project Nehemiah](#)).

Consequently, I wanted to use my fifth group of competencies, **Competency 5a: The Shoah and its Impact**, and **Competency 5b: Jewish Ethics** to build and deepen my understanding of the Shoah from both a historical and distinctly Jewish perspective, as well as, develop a Jewish ethical framework.

Related to **Competency 5a**, I have been studying the academic literature since the beginning of my Ph.D. learning journey. My goal for this competency was to gain a better understanding of the Shoah from the Jewish perspective and how its historical reality influences Jewish-Christian relations, and factor into my ethical leadership, as a Christian leader of The Matzevah Foundation (TMF).

Regarding **Competency 5b**, I wanted use this competency as a means to explore the global ethic of Micah 6:8, its corresponding ethical academic theories, and how these values intersect and form an ethical framework for the work of The Matzevah Foundation (TMF).

Concerning the intersection of the Shoah and its impact (**5a**), and Jewish ethics (**5b**) with my leadership and the work of TMF, I will examine in this reflection paper how ethical values (principally Micah 6:8) form a bridge for me, the board of TMF, and its volunteers to become Jewish in our understanding of the Shoah through *acting justly*—remembering the Shoah (Holocaust), *loving mercy*—restoring Jewish cemeteries in Poland, and through, *walking humbly*—reconciling Jews and Christians via this common mitzvah.

Ultimately, my understanding of the Shoah and these Jewish and ethical values will define, shape, and provide direction for my research and the crafting of my dissertation.

Definitions of Key Terms

Compassion. Showing concern or care for others is compassion. The Talmud considers compassion to be “the hallmark of an ethical person,” and it “is *the* defining characteristic of being a Jew” (Telushkin, 2006, p. 20). By being merciful or compassionate, we demonstrate that we care for what is valuable or meaningful to someone else, which could be an injustice, a misdeed, or emotional pain. The best way to show compassion is through a loving deed—an act of kindness in an attempt to make right what was wrong.

Competency 5a: The Shoah and its Impact. 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” (*Leadership Handbook*, 2011, p. 36). The fifth group of competencies is an option “individually chosen” (*Leadership Handbook*, 2011, p. 36). The purpose of this competency is to develop an academic, credible, and ethical understanding of the Shoah (Holocaust) and its impact.

Competency 5b: Jewish Ethics. 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” (*Leadership Handbook*, 2011, p. 36). The fifth group of competencies is an option “individually chosen” (*Leadership Handbook*, 2011, p. 36). the purpose of this competency is to develop understanding of how Jews view the world around them today through the values and behaviors of Micah 6:8: *justice/act justly, mercy/love mercy, and humility/walk humbly*.

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).

Genocide. The term genocide “did not exist before 1944” (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2018, para. 1). According to Boghossian (2010), the term genocide was “coined by the Polish jurist Raphael Lemkin in the 1940s” (p. 70). As a word, genocide is comprised of two parts: *genos*, a Greek term meaning people, and *cide* a Latin phrase meaning murder. Lemkin combined these two terms to mean, “the murder of a people” (p. 70). The term specifically refers to “violent crimes committed against groups with the intent to destroy the existence of the group” (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2018, para. 1).

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 a *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.

Jewish Cemetery. A Jewish cemetery in Hebrew is known by several names. It is referred to as *Beit Chaim*—“the house of the living,” *Beit Kevarot*—“the house of graves or tombs,” or *Beit Olam*—“the house of the world or eternity.” Cemeteries are considered to be holy places by the Jewish community.

Love. Scott Peck (2012) hypothesizes that love is more than a feeling or an emotion. He considers love to be “an act of will—namely, both an intention and an action” (Peck, 2012, p. 83, loc. 1078).

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.

Mercy. Mercy is derived from the Hebrew word, *chesed*, which means treating others with kindness, or more accurately with loving-kindness; it may be expressed as, *chesed shel-emet*, meaning (חסד של אמת) literally “kindness of truth” or true loving-kindness (Sienna, 2006, p. 79). Mercy may be operationalized and understood in terms of “loving acts” (Johnson, 2012, p. 127);

Reconciliation. Miroslav Volf (2000) considers reconciliation to have more than a theological meaning, which most Christian theologians understand as the “reconciliation of the individual and God” (p. 162). Nevertheless, Volf maintains that justice should be understood “as a dimension of the pursuit of reconciliation, whose ultimate goal is a community of love” (p. 163). Furthermore, he correctly reasons that reconciliation has a vertical dimension (between G-d and humanity) and a horizontal dimension (among men and women) and concludes that without this “horizontal dimension reconciliation would simply not exist” (p. 166).

Restoration. Restoration is a concept in which something becomes “corrupt and is restored to a new condition” (Wilkins & Sanford, 2009, p. 196). The idea of restoration is related to redemption, which means to redeem or to repurchase something or to regain possession of something through paying a price.

Shoah. The Shoah or Holocaust, literally means “destruction.” The Shoah is one of the greatest moral and ethical failures in history. It is challenging to deal with primarily because of the perception among many Jews is that Christians in many ways perpetrated the 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).

Tikkun Olam. *Tikkun Olam* is a Jewish concept centered on the notion of restoring, restorative works, healing, which means in Hebrew “repair of the world” (Sucharov, 2011, p. 172). In contemporary times, “*Tikkun Olam* has come to connote an ethical outlook by which we strive to create a better world” (Sucharov, 2011, p. 174). Furthermore, 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” (Sucharov, 2011, p. 175).

Worldview. Immanuel Kant introduced the term worldview; however, he did not develop his worldview concept. Nevertheless, it “later came to prominence” in the academic world through the efforts of Reformed theologians such as Orr, Kuyper, and Schaeffer (Thomson, 2012, p. 179). Olthuis defines worldview as “a framework or a set of fundamental beliefs through which we view the world and our calling and future in it” (cited in, Sire, 2009, p. 18).

The Shoah and its Impact (5a)

Learning Strategies and Resources

Since I had no prior academic coursework related to the Shoah, I employed my **Competency 5a: The Shoah and its Impact** as a vehicle to build, demonstrate, and document my competency in this leadership discipline. To this end, I took advantage of opportunities to do research regarding the Shoah, as a part of several courses at Andrews University. First, I enrolled in LEAD 535: Principles of Academic Writing where I wrote a summary of a journal article regarding Polish perception of Jews (**Artifact:** [A Summary Ordinary Poles Look at the Jews](#)), produced an annotated bibliography on Shoah related books (**Artifact:** [Reece Short Annotated Bibliography](#)), and I wrote a book review of the book *Contested Memories: Poles and Jews during the Holocaust and its Aftermath*, by Joshua Zimmerman (2003) (**Artifact:** [BR Contested Memories Steven Reece](#)). Furthermore, to develop and deepen my understanding of the Shoah from the Jewish perspective, I enrolled in two courses on the Holocaust taught by Tel Aviv University and Yad Vashem. The seminar was available through [Coursera.org](#). I earned certification in the following courses:

1. [The Holocaust - An Introduction \(I\): Nazi Germany: Ideology, The Jews and the World](#) (**Artifact:** [Holocaust 1 Syllabus](#)), and the course certification (**Verification:** [Holocaust 1 Course Certificate](#)).
2. [The Holocaust - An Introduction \(II\): The Final Solution](#) (**Artifact:** [Holocaust II Syllabus](#)) and the course certificate (**Verification:** [Holocaust II Course Certificate](#)).

Historical Context of the Shoah

The Shoah or Holocaust, literally means “destruction.” During WWII, Poland lost more than eighteen percent of its total population, which included Poles, Jews, Byelorussians, Ukrainians, and Lithuanians. Collectively, Poland lost more than six million of its citizens: about three million Christian Poles, and roughly three and a half million Polish Jews. While these losses appear numerically equivalent, they are not, especially in light of National Socialist policy and what transpired in Poland throughout the war. Both Poles and Jews were victims of the Third Reich, and consequently, both groups of people suffered, albeit *disproportionately*.

The most extraordinary aspect though of the death of six million Polish citizens is this disproportional loss of life in relationship to Poles and Jews. Proportionally, ten percent of the ethnic Polish Christian population perished, while ninety percent of the Jewish community was eradicated due to the Nazi policy of genocide and its effective implementation of the Final Solution during its reign of terror and destruction in Poland.

In this continuum of suffering, victimization is not the primary issue, but governmental policies are. The policies of National Socialism in the Third Reich grew out of what is known as Social Darwinism. In 1850, the Englishman, Herbert Spencer, advanced the theory of “constant struggle between humans in which the strongest would win”—it was not the survival of the “fittest” as Darwin later postulated but the survival of the “strongest” (Bauer, 2001, p. 49).

Nazi ideology desired to shape the entire world according to this racial theory. As such, “it did not limit itself to the Jews and to the aspiration of their disappearance and annihilation;” instead, Nazi Germany wanted to “create a New Order in Europe and beyond” (Dreifuss, Tel Aviv University, & Yad Vashem, 2016c).

Moreover, Nazi Redemptive Anti-Semitism defined the Jews as an anti-race, a destructive element of humanity, and as such, they were a hazard to the existence of the new order of the world. Subsequently, this ideology could not be expressed or realized without “the well-rooted hostility toward the Jews of Europe” (Dreifuss, Tel Aviv University, & Yad Vashem, 2016d).

In the way that Nazi ideology viewed the world, Aryans “were considered the master race, consisting above all of the Germans and ethnic Germans in Eastern Europe, but also northwestern populations such as the Dutch and the Scandinavians” and people from such groups were viewed as “superior” (Dreifuss et al., 2016c). Consequently, such people “needed and deserved more”—than other people and needed “more rights, more food, more space: *lebensraum*, living space” (Dreifuss et al., 2016c).

The Third Reich expressly pursued and executed genocidal policies targeting the Jews simply because they were Jews. Poles were victims, as well, because they were considered by Nazi policy as *Untermenschen*—people and nations, who were placed “at the bottom of the racial scale” (Dreifuss et al., 2016c). Jews and Poles were both victims of the ruthless Nazi occupation for different reasons, though they were “unequal victims,” to use a term phrased by the scholars Israel Gutman and Shmoleka Kofsky (cited in, Dreifuss et al., 2016c).

The Moral Catastrophe of the Shoah

The Shoah is one of the greatest moral and ethical failures in history. It is challenging to deal with primarily because of the perception among many Jews is that Christians in many ways perpetrated the Shoah. According to Porton (2012), prominent Jewish theologians “see a connection between Christianity and the Nazi ideology that created the Holocaust” (para. 5). For

example, Eliezer Berkovits, an Orthodox rabbi, stated that Christianity enabled the Nazis to execute the Shoah. Berkovits (1973) argued,

Without the contempt and hatred for the Jews planted by Christianity in the hearts of the multitude of its followers, Nazism's crime against the Jewish people could never have been conceived, much less executed (p. 40).

Additionally, Porton points to Richard L. Rubenstein, a Conservative rabbi, who maintains that Christians perpetrated a false image of a "mythological Jew" (para. 8). Rubenstein (1966) contends that this mythic or symbolic Jew, who like Judas, betrayed "Jesus with a token, a kiss," and thereby delivered to the Nazi regime "an enormously powerful religiomythic identification of the Jew with betrayal in the minds of German Christians" (p. 150).

Furthermore, Porton maintains that this Jewish iconography "provided the images and the models for the Nazis" to use in desensitizing the German population to Jews, who then became more and more to be viewed "as the devil's surrogates, God-killers" producing "fertile ground for Nazi propaganda" (para. 8). Lastly, Porton asserts that Fackenheim "sees a close connection between Nazi anti-Semitism and the religious and social doctrines of Christianity" (para. 8).

The Need for Dialogue

Stanisław Krajewski (2005) declares, "In general, Christian-Jewish dialogue nowhere began before World War II" (p. 207). The profound terrors of the Shoah, and the "break in history" it produced, justifiably led *some* Jews and Christians to realize their need for dialogue. Concomitantly, Krajewski specifies that "the shock of the Shoah" coupled with "the establishment of the state of Israel led to a deeper dialogue in the West;" however, he maintains that "in Poland, the shock [of the Shoah] was almost non-existent, and certainly not expressed" (p. 207).

Krajewski reasons that this inimitable reality in post-war Poland is understandable, and is perhaps due to the acuteness of “general Polish suffering” (p. 207) and the proximity “of the death camps made reflection harder” (p. 208). Furthermore, he states that Christian-Jewish dialogue in Poland did not emerge until after the *Nostra Aetate* statement and the communist forced emigration of Jews in 1968 and 1969; only then did the “Polish-Catholic intellectuals began the work of establishing the early stages of dialogue” (p. 209).

Apart from the dissimilar circumstances in Poland following the war, a group of Jews and Christians met formally at a conference in Seelisberg, Switzerland in 1947, so that they might mutually declare their collective anguish about the Shoah, their wish to confront anti-Semitism, and “their desire to foster stronger relationships between Jews and Christians” (International Council of Christians and Jews, 2009, p. 2). Their encounter produced the “Ten Points of Seelisberg,” calling for “Christian churches to reflect on and renew their understandings of Judaism and their relationship with Jews” (p. 2).

Another outcome of this meeting was the establishment of the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ), which continues “to pursue the dialogue [among Jews and Christians] in spite of difficulties” (p. 2). These advances following the Shoah were not ubiquitously adopted by Christian churches and theologians.

Although outdated, A. Roy Eckardt (1981) summarizes research regarding Jewish-Christian relations and dialogue following the war. At the time, he indicated that the “massive literature on the Shoah [was] written by Jews,” who focused their research “in smaller measure to the Christian-Jewish relation as such than do Christian writers” (p. 99). Christians, on the other hand, addressed principally Nazi ideology and “the question of Christendom’s responsibility for the anti-Semitism,” which ultimately produced the Shoah (p. 99).

Even so, Eckardt queries how could it be that rather few Christians were willing “to acknowledge the evil character and implications of its ‘teaching of contempt’ (Jules Isaac) for the Jewish people” (p. 99)? More so with regards to such contemptuous teaching, Krajewski (2005) maintains that “all Christians must come to terms with [it]” (p. 109).

After the *Erschütterung*, Fackenheim (2002) critically argues that Christian theologians in 1945 returned “seamlessly” to their theology “where they left it in 1933,” and wonders if they ever will address their anti-Semitic teaching, or, as he queries, “has ‘cultural amnesia’ set in” (para. 8)? Memory is subjective, and as such, it is selective, especially as it concerns remembering tragic historical events, such as the Shoah.

Concerning memory, Friedrich Nietzsche (1995) points out, “In the case of the smallest and the greatest happiness, it is always just one thing alone that makes happiness: the ability to forget” (pp. 88-89). Consequently, Miroslav Volf (2006) theorizes that some Christians psychologically may not wish to confront the guilt of the past, and would instead remain content by keeping the “present as their captive” (loc. 1736).

Despite these delimitations, there is hope. Karpen (2002) states that Jewish-Christian dialogue “has become commonplace” (p. 4); nonetheless, it is still challenging. Moreover, he posits that the events of the Shoah are “exercising a powerful transforming effect not only upon Judaism but also upon Christianity” (p. 205). Broad swaths of “the Christian Church have begun a process of abandoning the teaching of contempt” and have started to discard anti-Judaistic theological teachings (p. 205). Michael Kress (2012) views Jewish-Christian interaction as primarily improving because Christians have completely re-evaluated their “attitude toward Jews and Judaism” (para. 1).

The Christian re-evaluation of Judaism indeed has revolutionized the relationship between Jews and Christians. Kress further emphasizes that even though differences remain between them, contemporary Jews may reasonably expect for the first time in history “that these differences will be addressed through interfaith dialogue rather than the violence of the past” (para. 2).

Besides, Kress points out that during the Shoah, Christians played the role of “rescuers—people whose faith led them to risk their lives by hiding or otherwise saving Jews” (para. 4). The brave acts of these Christians do undeniably provide a significant connection between Jew and Christian; “however, the role of Christians and Christianity in perpetuating the Shoah remains a point of contention between the two religions” (Kress, 2012, para. 4). Interfaith dialogue among Jews and Christians is routine and ongoing; even so, it continues to be strained and inhibited due to factors, such as the Shoah and the Christian response to it.

Christian Response

How should Christians respond today to the Shoah? Karpen (2002) argues for the need for “an ethic of remembering” and maintains that there needs to be “a way to place memory [of the Shoah] closer to the heart of Christianity” (p. 205). Du Preez (1985) suggests that “neighbourly (sic) love is ‘justice-love,’ love that acts justly” (p. 37). Waldron Scott (1980) indicates that G-d “is concerned about social justice, not mere private morality” (p. 49). Glasser and McGavran (1983) echo this viewpoint and conclude that G-d “is strongly moved by the cries of the oppressed, particularly when his people collectively make no effort to relieve their anguish” (p. 35).

Justice acts because it loves because it cares. Peck (2012) theorizes that love is more than emotion and states that love is “an act of will—namely, both an intention and an action” (Peck,

2012, p. 83, loc. 1078). Christians are not only to be morally upright people, but they are to love others and be compassionate, i.e., be “with the victims” as Metz (1978) infers. Christians must remember that innocent Jews were unjustly treated, persecuted, and murdered, while, for the most part, the Christian community stood by silent and idle, effectively doing nothing. How can Christians actively remember and bring the memory of what happened to European Jews closer to their hearts? How does a Christian speak in this day to the injustice of the Shoah and the indifference toward it?

Micah 6:8, Jewish Values, and Academia (5b)

My underlying ethical assumption is that Micah 6:8 is a God-designed, moral template, or a godly pattern for moral and ethical living. In this section, I will consider my learning strategies and resources first. I will then consider Micah 6:8 and five relevant ethical theories analogous to Jewish ethics and the values and behaviors encountered in Micah 6:8. My analysis will be divided into six main parts. First, I will briefly examine Micah 6:8, and its associated biblical and academic treatments. Second, I will investigate Kant’s categorical imperative which mirrors the values and behaviors of acting justly or doing justice. Third, I will consider three ethical derivatives of compassion (mercy): altruism, communitarianism, and social responsibility, and their ethical Jewish parallels. Fourth, I will address the ethical connection between justice and mercy, and then I will consider loving acts, followed by humane orientation.

Learning Strategies and Resources

As a part of developing my theoretical ethical understanding for **Competency 5b: Jewish Ethics**, 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](#), which is part of my Leadership Portfolio. 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](#).

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](#)). For my coursework, I wrote a paper regarding major Jewish values and their ethical implications for the work of TMF (**Artifact:** [Jewish and Ethical Basis for TMF](#)). Second, I wrote and analyzed Micah 6:8 and its analogous academic parallels (**Artifact:** [Micah 6:8 and Academic Parallels](#)). I also produced a PowerPoint Presentation for use in public speaking opportunities as a part of TMF's educational program (**Artifact:** [The Matzevah Foundation 25 Oct 2015](#); **Verification:** [EJC 2015 Conf Brochure](#), pp. 5, 21, and 36; **Evaluation:** [Ref Letter for Steven](#)). Last, I wrote a paper that I

delivered for The Global Conversation Lecture Series, *Mercy: The Power of Remembering, Restoring, and Reconciling* (**Artifact:** [2012.9 2 MERCY REECE](#)).

Finally, to demonstrate how, I have incorporated my learnings and used them to guide my research for my dissertation, I researched, wrote and successfully defended my dissertation (**Verification:** [The Third Space: The Meeting of Jew and Christian in the Act of Remembering, Restoring, and Reconciling - A Case Study of the Matzevah Foundation](#)).

Micah 6:8

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). The Micah ethical pattern is characterized by acting justly, loving mercy/kindness, and walking humbly with God. 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).

Jeremiah 7:5-7 defines the behaviors required of God in Micah’s passage:

If you really change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly, if you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods to your own harm, then I will let you live in this place, in the land I gave your forefathers for ever and ever (NIV, 1984).

God is saying that he will allow the Children of Israel to live “in the land I gave your forefathers for ever and ever, if they did three things:

1. Do not live as you are; change your ways and actions and *deal with each other justly*.
2. Do not oppress the weak or shed innocent blood; *show mercy, care/love for others*.
3. Do not follow other gods: *be faithful to the One True God*.

God is echoing once more what he requires of us—acting justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly by providing concrete direction.

In Matthew 23:23, Jesus says that we do well when we keep the Law; however, he emphasizes that we should not neglect the important matters of the Law: justice, mercy and faithfulness.

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices--mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law-- justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former" (NIV, 1984).

We see how Jesus Christ affirms the Torah while at the same time he juxtaposes it to the values and behaviors that God requires, so that we do not neglect "the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy, and faithfulness."

Table 1: Values and Behaviors in Micah 6:8, Jeremiah 7:5-7, and Matthew 23:23

Micah 6:8	Jeremiah 7:5-7	Matthew 23:23
Justice/Act justly	Do not live as you are; change your ways and actions and deal with each other justly	Justice
Mercy/Love mercy	Do not oppress the weak or shed innocent blood; show mercy, care/love for others	Mercy
Humility/Walk humbly	Do not follow other gods: be faithful to the One True God	Faithfulness

In Table 1, above, we may compare the values of Micah 6:8, with the associated behaviors of values characterized in Jeremiah 7:5-7, and how Jesus interpreted and gave them meaning in the New Testament.

Act Justly

According to Joseph Telushkin (2006), the prophet Micah declares 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). For this reason, we should act justly or do justice. What is justice? According to Dictionary.com (2020), justice is:

- The quality of being just; righteousness, equitableness, or moral rightness
- The moral principle determining just conduct
- Conformity to this principle, as manifested in conduct; just conduct, dealing, or treatment
- the administering of deserved punishment or reward
- the maintenance or administration of what is just by law, as by judicial or other proceedings

Therefore by extension, justice means that we are to be fair in how we deal with other people. We are not lie, cheat, or steal.

Furthermore, the Torah teaches that justice is focused upon our actions toward others. According to Telushkin (2001), the Hebrew word *tzedakah* is translated as justice or righteousness and “it is usually translated, somewhat inaccurately as charity” (p. 573). He elaborates further by stating that acting justly “is perhaps the most important obligation Judaism imposes on the Jew” (p. 573). The Torah admonishes us in Deuteronomy 16:20 to pursue justice: “Justice (*tzedakah*), justice you shall pursue.” Later we learn from the Talmud: “*Tzedakah* is equal to all the other commandments combined (Bava Bathra 9b)” (cited in, Telushkin, 2001, p.

573). The giving of *tzedakah* is viewed in Judaism as acting justly. If we seek justice, we help others, the oppressed and care for orphans and widows. These actions express mercy.

Love Mercy

What does mercy mean? Mercy means to be “compassionate or kindly forbearance shown toward an offender, an enemy, or other person in one's power; *also*: lenient or compassionate treatment <begged for *mercy*>” (Meriam-Webster, 2012). Compassionate treatment of others is an ethic or care, which we know from our last session as altruism. Altruism demonstrates care toward people in need and generally does not expect anything in return. In the Micah 6:8, we see that mercy is derived from the Hebrew word, *chesed*, which means treating others with kindness, literally loving-kindness. This type of kindness shows concern or care for others; furthermore, we understand this sort of kindness as compassion.

The Talmud considers compassion to be “the hallmark of an ethical person” and it “is *the* defining characteristic of being a Jew” (Telushkin, 2006, p. 20). In the writings of the Prophet Isaiah 1:16b-17, we hear the admonition to Israel: “Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.” Scripture characterizes God as just and righteous and connects these attributes to his mercy. He is just, righteous, and acts mercifully on behalf of humanity. We also observe in Hosea 6:6 that God is not pleased by sacrifices, but kindness: “For I desire mercy (kindness), not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.”

By being merciful or compassionate, we demonstrate that we care for what was important to someone else, which could be an injustice, a misdeed, or an emotional pain. The best way to show compassion is through a loving deed—an act of kindness in an attempt to make right what was wrong. In so doing, we are able to display the character and heart of God. Recall that God

“saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy” (Titus 3:5) – his kindness toward us.

Walk Humbly

Doing what is right or what the Bible defines as righteousness demonstrates integrity of character, which is also described and inferred in Micah 6:8 by “walking humbly.” The way we “walk” or live our lives reveals our character. Integrity is best seen by truthfulness in our dealings. When leaders accept bribes, do what is best for them or lie to or mislead others, we see a lack of integrity. Universally, people desire to see right actions in corrupt times. It is critical to note that integrity plays a role in encouraging leaders “to be true to themselves” and their values, while humility causes leaders to consider their limitations that “might keep them from taking action” (Johnson, 2012, p. 246). Both of these character traits play a vital part in shaping and defining our personal ethics.

Humility and Self-Awareness

Telushkin (2006) defines humility as “not regarding ourselves as more important than other people” and he adds, “It implies judging ourselves not in comparison with others but in light of our capabilities” (p. 212). This conclusion echoes the concept of humility and self-awareness which enables us objectively to assess “strengths and limitations” (Johnson, 2012, p. 88). We have also seen the scriptural admonition: “*Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment*” (Romans 12:3) (NIV, 1984).

Interestingly, we see that Telushkin (2006) points to moderation “in pursuing a path between arrogance and humility,” citing the great Jewish religious teacher Maimonides, who said in *Laws and Character Development*: “one should move away from the one extreme [i.e. of arrogance] and adopt the other [extreme of humility]” (p. 211).

Three Sources of Humility

Telushkin (2006) identifies three sources of humility, which amazingly relate to what academic researchers and ethical theorists have proposed, which are (p. 213):

1. “An ongoing awareness of God: *‘I am always mindful of the Lord’s presence’*”
(Psalms 16:8)”
2. “The awareness that every human being with whom we interact is created in God’s image (Genesis 1:27), and therefore is as valuable as we ourselves”
3. “. . . Suffering, which can make even self-confident people aware that they are not the masters of their fate”

We can connect the “ongoing awareness of God” to an idea “that there is a power greater than the self”—greater than us, which will keep us from “developing an inflated view . . . [of our own] importance;” it will enable us to appreciate “the worth and contributions of others” (Johnson, 2012, p. 88) because we understand that everyone is “created in the image of God.” Finally, Telushkin points out that we are not masters of our fate, which reinforces self-awareness that allows us to be humble and thereby able to be objective and see our “strengths and limitations,” because being mindful of “one’s weaknesses” and allows us to be “open to new ideas and knowledge” (Johnson, 2012, p. 88).

Humility and Academia

Morris, Brotheridge, and Urbanski (2005) propose that “self-esteem is best thought of as a predictor of humility” (p. 1336). According to Johnson (2012), Morris, Brotheridge and Urbanski “argue that true humility strikes a balance between having an overly low and having an overly high opinion of the self” (p. 88). Johnson reasons that this type of understanding does not

mean that we have “low self-esteem, as many people think, or of underestimating our abilities” (p. 88). Instead, Johnson postulates that humility is made up of three basic components (p. 88):

1. Self-awareness: “a humble leader can objectively assess her or his strengths and limitations”
2. Openness: is a result of “knowing one’s weaknesses” and having humility “means being open to new ideas and knowledge”
3. Transcendence (exceeding in excellence): transcendent leaders realize “that there is a power greater than the self,” which keeps them from “developing an inflated view of their importance” and enables them to appreciate “the worth and contributions of others”

We see from Johnson (2012) also that understanding the power that humility has on people is important because humility impacts how they behave ethically in a powerful way. He points out that “humble leaders are less likely to be corrupted by power, claim excessive privileges, engage in fraud, abuse followers, and pursue selfish goals” (p. 88). Lastly, humble leaders are “more willing to serve others” and practice servant leadership by “putting the needs of followers first while acting as role models” (p. 88).

Kant’s Categorical Imperative

The first ethical behavior and value of Micah 6:8 is to do justice or act justly. Justice is communal and expresses itself in the community in the way people interact with each other. Justice is a value, but it is also behavior. Subsequently, justice echoes a sense of morality and reflects the categorical imperative of the German philosopher Immanuel Kant (ca. 1785), who proposed doing what is right—no matter what. Some investigators and scholars disagree with the

universal nature of Kant's argument because, according to Johnson (2012), Kant asserts that "there are universal principles that should be followed in every situation" (p. 160).

Since Kant's ethical strategy is grounded in justice or righteousness (justice—doing what is right) it is related to the justice that is required of God. This sort of righteousness demonstrates integrity of character, which is also characterized in Micah 6:8 by "walking humbly." The way we "walk" or conduct our lives reveals our character. Integrity is best seen by truthfulness in our dealings. When leaders accept bribes, do what is best for them or lie or mislead, we see a lack of integrity. I believe that people universally desire to see right actions in corrupt times.

Compassion

Compassion means to feel with someone else and may be defined as "an orientation that puts others ahead of self;" more so, this type of orientation focusing on others distinguishes "ethical leaders from their unethical colleagues" (Johnson, 2012, p. 89). When we care for others around us in our community or demonstrate compassion towards our community, we express the ethical ideas of altruism, communitarianism, and social responsibility. In the following sections, I will discuss these three ethical derivatives of compassion along with several related biblical and Jewish values.

Altruism

The compassionate treatment of others is an ethic of care, which is known as altruism. Altruism demonstrates care toward people in need and generally does not expect anything in return. Since altruism is caring for other people, it is akin to love of neighbor. We can see that altruism closely mirrors "loving mercy" or loving-kindness from Micah 6:8. In Psalm 86:5, we read, "For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness [mercy] to

all who call upon You.” Notice that God is good, ready to forgive because of his “abundant” loving-kindness. Once more, we see that God’s mercy is loving-kindness.

When considering altruism or love of neighbor, Johnson (2012) emphasizes this ethical consideration as “the ultimate ethical standard” (p. 170). I agree with Johnson’s conclusion; nevertheless, I would take into consideration the Jewish view of *Tzedakah* (charity) and *Gemilut Chesed* (acts of loving-kindness), which I will address more completely in Chapter 2.

Nonetheless, we may conclude that altruism is caring for other people and is akin to love of neighbor. We can see that altruism closely mirrors loving mercy from Micah 6:8. As a value, altruism demonstrates care toward people in need and generally does not expect anything in return. It is considered by many to be “the ultimate ethical standard” (Johnson, 2012, p. 170).

Communitarianism

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.

Social Responsibility

The communitarianism ethical theory is related to the theoretical and 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 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.

When considering the social responsibility of corporations, Jones (1980) views corporate social responsibility 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, 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).

Jewish views of social responsibility flow from the belief that God created humanity and placed men and women on this planet; therefore, he created us 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.

Justice Mitigated by Love

Du Preez (1985) discusses God’s concern for those treated unjustly. By doing what is right toward one’s neighbor, the love, or the loving-kindness of God is revealed. Furthermore, according to D. J. Bosch (1984), justice is central to the gospel of Matthew (p. 27), which illustrates the fact that the God of love is the God of justice or righteousness. Bosch argues that we cannot divorce “spiritual righteousness . . . from earthly justice” (p. 28). Du Preez connects these two dimensions of God to each other, forming a concept he describes as “*justice-love*” and links it to the kingdom of God. He believes that this construct is valid in both the Tanakh (Old Testament) and New Testament.

Scripture reveals God, as the God of love, who is also the God of righteousness and justice, and as Waldron Scott (1980) indicates, this God, “is concerned about social justice, not mere private morality” (p. 49). Glasser and McGavran (1983) echo this point of view and conclude that God, “is strongly moved by the cries of the oppressed, particularly when his people collectively make no effort to relieve their anguish” (p. 35). The relevance of these two statements is that the people of God are to be not just morally upright, but they are to be compassionate and to show concern for their neighbors—those around them oppressed by injustice.

Jesus summarized the Torah (the Law) into two basic statements: love of God and love of neighbor and declared that the entirety of the Law and the Prophets rest on these two commandments (Matt. 22:40). Jesus does not merely have in view for those, who follow him only to obey a series of “moral or ceremonial rules;” obviously he is being “quite concrete” and stating that loving God is “revealed in doing what is right towards one's neighbour (sic)” (Du Preez, 1985, p. 45).

Doing what is right because of love for neighbor is what Du Preez equates with his concept of *justice-love*. The justice that Jesus has in view is clarified further in the so-called “Sermon on the Mount” (found in Matthew 5:21-47). In his teaching, Jesus illuminates the concept of God’s justice “in terms of a number of pithy contrasts in which the keyword is *love* that wishes to do right to one's neighbour (sic),” which by so doing demonstrates “love towards the hostile fellow-man, through which the pupil of the kingdom of God would be ‘perfect’ as his heavenly Father is perfect” (Du Preez, 1985, p. 45). In other words, this type of justice and love would reveal the character of God in a person by their actions.

Loving Acts

The question of evil is not new. Humanity lives on a planet inhabited by corruption, which may be exemplified by the horrors birthed through such tragedies, as the genocides of Rwanda and certainly the Shoah. I hope that Jews and Christians can come to terms with the past trauma brought about by long-term anti-Semitism, anti-Judaism, and the Shoah through dealing with such evil today by means of “loving acts.” Johnson (2012) considers that “Scott Peck is not alone in arguing that loving acts can overcome evil” (cited in, Johnson, 2012, p. 127). Peck (2012) defines the concept of love in this manner: “Love is as love does. Love is an act of will—namely, both an intention and an action. Will also implies choice” (p. 83, loc. 1078). The concept

of loving acts will be academically linked to humane orientation below and dealt with more thoroughly in the next section; however, it is important to emphasize that love acts. It is not passive. Compassion is an extension of love in action.

Humane Orientation

House, Javidan, Hanges, and Dorfman (2002) outline the parameters of the GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) Study, which is a multi-country/culture case study of nine dimensions of leadership and culture in 62 nations. These dimensions are performance orientation, future orientation, assertiveness, power distance, humane orientation, institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and gender egalitarianism.

The GLOBE Study acknowledges the role of religion in shaping our understanding of what humane behavior is. In Judaism, Islam and Christianity, God is seen as the “ultimate” source of “goodness” and requires “humane-orientated behaviors and doing good to others,” while Eastern Religions such as Buddhism and Taoism, “there is no God that gives orders in the direction of goodness;” instead, individuals must “harmonize” themselves with the “cosmic rhythm” and do what is “good” (Kabaskal & Bodur, 2004, p. 565).

Humane orientation may be defined as “the degree to which individuals in organizations or societies encourage and reward individuals for being fair, altruistic, friendly, generous, caring, and kind to others” (Javidan & Dastmalchian, 2009). Kabaskal and Bodur (2004) explain further that “this dimension is manifested in the way people treat one another and in the social programs institutionalized within each society” (p. 569). Simply stated humane orientation is concerned with the welfare of humanity.

Descriptions of humane behavior are not new but have existed since antiquity and “ideas and values” related to this dimension may be found among “classic Greek philosophers” and “in the teachings of many of the major religions of the world” (Kabaskal & Bodur, 2004, p. 565). The principal idea embedded in the classical Greek understanding concerning this human attribute is reciprocal as well as mutual love found in friendship. Humans are interrelated and connected to each other; therefore, love or concern for others is a fundamental expression of humanity.

Humane orientation is expressed differently across cultures along a continuum from high to low humane orientation in societies and institutions. Briefly, the concept of humane orientation is not unique; it is related to what Hofstede and Bond (1988) called “Kind Heartedness.” It is also related to the work of Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) regarding “Human Nature Is Good vs. Human Nature Is Bad.” We also see a connection with the work of Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti (1993) regarding their treatment of “the Civic Society” and from McClelland (1985) and his concepts concerning “the affiliative motive.” Furthermore, Price (1989), Dover (1980) and Ferrari (1987) looked at how classical Greek philosophers of Plato, Aristotle and Socrates viewed interpersonal relationships. Triandis (1995) addressed culture theory and said that “altruism, benevolence, kindness, love and generosity” are important factors to consider with regards to social behaviors of people (cited in, Warner-Söderholm, 2012, p. 6).

Discussion

Both Judaism and Christianity are rich religious traditions offering us sets of ethical values. However, are these offerings of values enough? Parker Palmer (1994) argues,

The great spiritual traditions are not primarily about values and ethics, not primarily about doing right or living well. The spiritual traditions are primarily about *reality*. The spiritual

traditions all strive to penetrate the illusions of the external world and to name its underlying truth—what it is, how it emerges, and how we relate to it (p. 3).

Parker offers a striking commentary about the nature of reality and our attempts to navigate our way through it. Essentially, Parker asks, “What is truth, how does it emerge, and how do we relate to it?” Our values and behaviors are linked. What we believe, or hold to be true, we do. As a Jesus-follower, Parker says that he was taught “ethical exhortations, as guides to what we *ought* to do” (p. 3). Consequently, he asserts that the “ethical pronouncements” of Jesus “are simply his statements of what is real. That is the nature of great spiritual teaching” (p. 3).

There is a difference between what is and what should be. This is reality. How do we reconcile these polar opposites of what is and what should be, and thereby, change the reality around us? For me, my answer grew out of my understanding of theism and redemption. I will address this matter further in Chapter 2, page 39, in the section titled: My Primary Worldview Assumption.

Theodore Malloch (2011) points to “the ability of people with religious faith and spiritual commitment to make great successes of their businesses” (loc. 232). The reality is that many, if not most, businesses fail, so Malloch contends that “faith changes business for the better, just as it changes lives” (loc. 232). Continuing he states, “[Faith] injects into business something that [he calls] ‘spiritual capital’” (loc. 232). Therefore, we may conclude that religious faith injects truth in to life and changes reality.

Malloch’s concept of “spiritual capital”—this injection of faith into reality, is an interesting idea. Wolf (2010b) applies this notion to what he calls a “Jesus-shaped *worshipview*,” or a “J-shaped spiritual capital” (p. 8). Wolf posits that Malloch

[A]rgues that historically, the spiritual capital of Protestant business persons focuses on the three virtues of faith, hope, and charity. That Jesus-shaped *worshipview*, says Malloch, yields

a worldview triad of leadership discipline (faith), social compassion (charity), and persevering justice (hope) (p. 8).

Wolf's emphasizes that these three virtues of faith, charity, and hope produce what he describes as "worldview triad of leadership discipline (faith), social compassion (charity), and preserving justice (hope)" (p. 8). We may link Wolf's worldview triad to Micah 6:8 and the values of *humility*/walking humbly/*integrity*/faithfulness, *mercy*/loving-kindness/*charity*, and *justice*/acting justly/*social responsibility*.

If we take into consideration the ethical contributions of Parker, Malloch, and Wolf and we merge and compare them with the ethical values and behaviors that we discovered in Micah 6:8, Jeremiah 7:5-7, Matthew 23:23, and analogous academic theories, we may summarize and compare these concepts in Table 2:

Table 2: Summary and Comparison of Ethical Values

Micah 6:8	Jeremiah 7:5-7	Matthew 23:23	Ethical Theory	Worldview Triad
Justice/act justly	Do not live as you are; change your ways and actions and deal with each other justly	Justice	Kant's "Do what is right" Justice-love	"Preserving justice (hope)" Social responsibility
Mercy/love mercy	Do not oppress the weak or shed innocent blood; show mercy, care/love for others	Mercy	Altruism Communitarianism Loving-acts Humane Orientation	"Social compassion (charity)" demonstrating loving-kindness
Humility/walk humbly	Do not follow other gods; be faithful to the One True God	Faithfulness	Humility Integrity	Integrity having "leadership discipline (faith)"

Summary

I have surveyed the history of the Shoah through various mechanisms, such as reading several scholarly books, and enrolling in coursework associated with my academic pursuits at

Andrews University. However, and most importantly, I augmented my understanding of the Shoah by studying it through the eyes of Jewish scholars as a part of the coursework that I took from Yad Vashem and Tel Aviv University.

Regarding Jewish ethics, I have extensively researched the literature and encountered material that will ensure the development a solid ethical foundation in my life and work. I have focused on Micah 6:8 as the vehicle to explore Jewish ethics via a simple set of three values and behaviors: *justice/act justly*, *mercy/love mercy*, and *humility/walk humbly*. Integrity and humility also play critical roles in developing an ethical life. I have included critical and vital ethical theories and attempted to connect them with biblical understanding where applicable. I also used the teaching of Jesus as a basis for giving insight to these major ethical values. The Jewish influence to the discipline of ethics is immeasurable, as Jewish scholars and rabbis have helped us to understand the requirements of God, worked out over time in the context of life. We owe the Jewish people a great deal as they are the source of everything that we know about God and what he requires of us.

CHAPTER 2

APPLYING THEORY TO PRACTICE

Speaking for Those, Who Have No Voice Today

Questions

Many years ago, I lived in Poland among Poles, where I served as a Baptist minister, cooperating with the Baptist Union of Poland. I learned Polish, and I became a student of Polish culture and history. I became particularly interested in the tragic tale of Poland during and after the Second World War. I read much about the plight of Poles and their Jewish neighbors.

Why should an American Baptist minister be concerned with the aftermath of the Shoah? For many people today, Auschwitz is a forgotten place, a decaying memory. Nonetheless, it stands and lives on today as a museum, sustaining an enduring remembrance of the Shoah.

Auschwitz cries out, demanding justice for innocent victims murdered in its gas chambers. It was just one of the six Nazi Germany death camps built and operated in occupied Poland as a means to annihilate the Jews of Europe on an industrial scale. More so, it symbolizes the events of the Shoah and the murder of millions of Jews, who were forced to work and relegated to die in labor or concentration camps, caged and starved in Ghettos, rounded up and

deported to death camps, and marched or carted off from villages, towns, and cities to be executed in mass shootings across Eastern European fields, ravines, and forests.

Ultimately, the enduring legacy of Auschwitz is one of asking ourselves very difficult questions. I have visited Auschwitz and Auschwitz Birkenau on numerous occasions. Every time I visit, I go to the gas chambers, crematoria, and ash pits. I stand in silence surveying what remains and ask myself, “Why?”

Racelle Weiman (2008) had a similar question and sought reasons as to why the Shoah happened from Yehuda Bauer, who she states was at the time, “the preeminent Holocaust scholar” (p. 88). In response to her inquiry, Weiman relates that Bauer said that historians could answer the historical questions concerning the events of the Shoah, such as, how it began, who was involved, and where it occurred. However, she discovered that, according to Bauer, historians could not answer the questions concerning “why men do evil” and “where was God,” because they “are not historical questions—for that, you will have to go elsewhere” (p. 88).

My Primary Worldview Assumption

In my search for answers to my questions, I found another question: How *should* I live my life and lead my work “in order to be consistent with” (Anderson, 2014, p. 97) my Christian theistic worldview? Another way that I have asked myself this question is: What should my response as a Christian to the Shoah? Anderson (2014) points out that “many people today suffer from a disconnect” from what their stated values and beliefs are and what they actually do (p. 97). So, how do I reconcile, i.e., find agreement in what I do—in my work in restoring Jewish cemeteries and what my worldview values are as a Christian?

I did not easily come to understand what my response as a Christian to the Shoah should be. What could one man do in the face of such a monumental tragedy, such an injustice? How could I even lead others to join me in it?

Since, I have been culturally and academically shaped by a Christian theistic worldview as outlined by Anderson (2014), I believe in a personal God (p. 29) and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ (p. 36). Furthermore according to Anderson (2014), theism (non-Christian, or Jewish, and Christian) holds to the understanding that “there is a real, objective distinction between good and evil,” which leads me to believe that there is “an ultimate standard of goodness in the universe” and God is that standard (p. 45).

Sire (2009) indicates that God’s “goodness is expressed in two ways, through holiness and through love” (Sire, 2009, p. 30). For me God’s righteousness and his love conceptually form the fundamental basis of my worldview understanding. Lastly, there is one other relevant element of the Christian theistic worldview that I espouse, and it is that I live my life for God meaning that I live to serve him. Essentially, I live my life “to glorify God” and “reveal his character by being who [I was] created to be” (Sire, 2009, p. 45).

Therefore, I may conclude that my primary worldview assumption is that “God is good,” which is seen in two dimensions of his character “through holiness and through love” (Sire, 2009, p. 30).

First, God’s holiness “emphasizes his righteousness” and second, his love is directed towards “self-sacrifice and the full extension of his favor to his people” (Sire, 2009, p. 30). As Sire (2009) points out from these two aspects of God’s character, his person, we can conclude that “there is an absolute and personal standard of righteousness . . . and second, that there is hope for humanity” (p. 31).

Sire (2009) posits, I should live out and understand my worldview is “an attitude of humility,” so that I will not be tempted by my own desire of power (p. 281).

I see that Micah 6:8 has become for me the key outflow of God’s holiness and love in my life. In Micah 6:8 I think that 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.

What does Micah 6:8 and other aspects of my worldview look like when they are applied to my life and my practice? In referring to Micah 6:8, Telushkin (2006) 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).

The righteousness of God in action is speaking to injustice by bringing justice to the situation—acting justly. Remembering is important. Memory work is not without a cost, especially when we talk about mutually experienced trauma and collectively enacted wrongdoing, as in the Shoah. Judith Lewis Herman (2015) states, “Remembering and telling the truth about terrible events are prerequisites both for the restoration of the social order and for the healing of individual victims” (p. 1).

Radical Idea

I do not have an answer for the evil perpetrated by the Nazis during the Second World War and the Shoah. Nor, do I have a reason for the slaughter of millions of Jews across Europe, and particularly in Poland. All I know is that I feel compelled to speak to the injustice of the Shoah and confront its evil. The question for me became: How? Through an unusual encounter with a Polish woman of Jewish heritage in 2004, I learned of the plight and of the importance of one Jewish cemetery in Poland. Due to this encounter, I began to research and consider what it

would look like, if I began to lead others to join me in caring for and restoring Jewish cemeteries in Poland as a means to work toward dialogue and reconciliation with Jews. We began working together in 2005 and have been working with the Jewish community of Poland to overcome the evil of the past through what Scott Peck calls “loving acts” (Johnson, 2012, p. 127).

A Brief History of TMF

Since 2005, a group of Baptist Christians has been working with the Jewish Community of Poland, and local Polish Christians to care for and restore Jewish cemeteries in Poland. TMF grew out of our work and relationship with the Rabbinical Commission for Matters of Cemeteries (RCC). In 2010, we established TMF as a non-profit, public charity. TMF exists to educate the public about the Shoah, mobilize resources for facilitating Jewish cemetery restoration and commemoration projects in Poland. Presently through these actions, TMF has broadened its dialogue and cooperation with the Jewish community of Poland and the Jewish diaspora of Polish origins by partnering with several Jewish and Polish organizations to remember and preserve the Jewish heritage of Poland.

Statement of Vision

The Matzevah Foundation seeks to remember and honor the Jewish heritage of Poland by restoring Jewish cemeteries and reconciling Jews and Christians through participating in a common *mitzvah*—Hebrew singular for good deed. Caring for the dead is a *mitzvah*—a religious requirement fulfilling commandments from the Torah and *Halakhah*. Accordingly, caring for the dead is seen as being one of the highest mitzvahs (pl—*mitzvot*), which a Jew may perform.

Statement of Purpose

The mission of the Matzevah Foundation is twofold. First, it will mobilize human and financial resources to care for and preserve the Jewish heritage of Poland by restoring Jewish cemeteries in Poland. Second, it will educate the public regarding the history of Polish Jews during and following the Shoah in Poland.

An Ethical Framework: Micah 6:8 and Jewish Ethics

Values and Behaviors

Since I tend to be rationalistic, I see truth objectively. I prefer things clearly to be in black and white with no shades of gray. For this reason, I must be careful when making decisions or judgments about the situations in life that I encounter instead of being critical or judgmental. In reading Cooper (2006) as a part of LEAD 645, I learned that “our values are constantly guiding our behavior” (p. 26). Cooper advises us to make “healthy judgments” about situations and the people involved (p. 27). Such healthy judgments included evaluating “evidence carefully,” being “unafraid to decide,” recognizing “its own limitations,” being “willing to change its mind,” refusing “to distrust another’s motives unless” there is clear evidence otherwise, holding “its convictions with charity and tolerance for others,” separating “behavior and ideas from people, who hold them,” and having “concern for others” (pp. 27-28).

I agree with Cooper in that one of the most critical considerations for me, as a leader, is to have concern for others (p. 27). One of the most prevalent themes that stuck in my mind while reading Cooper was that of having compassion for others and not to be judgmental of them as a person. I believe that this simple consideration is the most difficult for all of us because we tend not to want to listen to another person's viewpoint but to advance our own.

Secondly, one aspect of differentiating my worldview from the worldview of others is to be objective and to think critically. This outlook is an outgrowth of my rationalistic viewpoint; however, this does not mean that I am dismissive of other perspectives. If I learn to evaluate what others are saying around me, I will learn critical thinking and be better able to make judgments about what is going on in a particular situation. Cooper (2006) noted one useful skill (among many) and that was being able “to separate ideas and personalities,” instead of “lumping ideas and personalities together” condemning both (p. 38). Good ideas could be lost if we dismiss them at the source because we do not like a particular person or dismiss them altogether. Leaders should be able to make a judgment about an idea apart from their personality or that of another person.

We live in a diverse world full of different people, ideas and ways to do things; therefore we should not be ethnocentric, but open to people and their notions. We should not be judgmental and discount an idea because it is coming from a person from some other culture or a different cultural perspective. Pluralism as an ideology or philosophy demands that every view must be “accepted as legitimate and endorsed as right for the person holding them” (Cooper, 2006, p. 110), which in essence becomes a dogma or just as dogmatic as any other belief system claiming to have the absolute truth.

All perspectives are not the same. The key is to accept a person and allow them to voice their views; listening does not mean that we are endorsing their viewpoint, what they are saying, or doing. What this means is that moral norms exist. We may still maintain moral convictions and have universal ethical standards across cultures. Stenger (2006) sustains this viewpoint and 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).

Jewish and Ethical Values Undergirding TMF

In seminary, the first formal course I took in ethics was Basic Christian Ethics; the course dealt with essential Christian ethics. My seminary education along with my training and pastoral experience have worked together significantly to shape my ethics and values. 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. Nonetheless, I came to realize that my perspective was distinctly Christian and little understanding of the Jewish ethical perspective associated with such work.

From my experience and training, I recognize that my values and my associated behaviors are linked, as they are with any other person. Ethics are *not* something for just theoretical or abstract living but should provide principles concerning our behavior, i.e., what we do. From the beginning, Micah 6:8 was the central ethical construct that I used to guide my work and lead Christian volunteers to care for and restore Jewish cemeteries in Poland. Ultimately, 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 foundation. In the following section, I will briefly consider what I have encountered in my studies regarding the central values of Micah 6:8 and its parallel academic constructs.

Micah 6:8

As I mentioned previously, my primary worldview assumption is that “God is good,” which is seen in two dimensions of his character “through holiness and through love” (Sire, 2009, p. 30). First, God’s holiness “emphasizes his righteousness” and secondly, his love is directed towards “self-sacrifice and the full extension of his favor to his people” (Sire, 2009, p. 30). Furthermore, as Sire (2009) points out from these two aspects of God’s character, his person, we can conclude that “there is an absolute and personal standard of righteousness . . . and second, that there is hope for humanity” (p. 31).

My basic ethical assumption is that we find “hope for humanity”—a moral template in Micah 6:8. 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. I see that Micah 6:8 has become for me the critical outflow of God’s holiness and love in my life. In Micah 6:8, I think that 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.

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).

In Matthew 23:23, Thom Wolf (2010a) argues that Jesus Christ positioned “Micah’s moral mark as the central weighty valuation of life” (p. 122). We see, in both Micah 6:8 and Matthew 23:23, 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).

Weeds, Deeds, and Seeds

Thanks to the counsel of Thom Wolf, I began considering how I could link these three primary values and behaviors of Micah 6:8 and Matthew 23:23, as a Baptist minister, to the work that I was doing in Jewish cemeteries in Poland. Wolf gave me a simple theoretical construct of what he termed “weeds, deeds, and seeds.”¹ First, we see the heart of God and about what he cares—his values and expected behaviors in Micah 6:8. We see how Jesus captures the same values in Matthew 23:23 and points out how we tend to neglect the “more important matters of the law”—justice, mercy, and faithfulness. I came to understand that God was leading me to deal with the “weeds” of injustice produced as a result of the Shoah. By desiring to set right what was wrong, we expressed justice in response to the injustice of what occurred during the Shoah to the European and Polish Jews.

¹ The concept of “*Weeds, Deeds, and Seeds*” is attributed gratefully to Dr. Thom Wolf, who developed and who in 2006 shared with me these principles based on Micah 6:8.

Second, how did I go about dealing with this injustice? God led me to demonstrate mercy by performing “deeds”—a *mitzvah* as it relates to caring for the dead lying in Polish-Jewish cemeteries. Why? One of the most important *mitzvot* (pl. *mitzvah*) that a Jew can perform is honoring the dead and care of cemeteries—because the dead cannot give thanks. So, I began to lead Christian volunteers, both American and Polish, to restore Jewish cemeteries in Poland. By working to restore forgotten Jewish cemeteries, we literally were removing “weeds” in the form of undergrowth, shrubs and small trees, along with trash and other debris.

Through our efforts, we demonstrated God’s love, his mercy. We showed concern and cared about something that belongs to God—his people and what has happened to them. Consequently, we began to deal with the injustice of World War II. Third, because of walking humbly with God, our faithfulness has expressed God’s mercy. Accordingly, our ministry of reconciliation ultimately led to opportunities to sow “seeds,” i.e., opportunities to speak truth about our love for God and neighbor and who we are as followers of Jesus Christ.

Indispensable Jewish Values

Chesed Shel Emet

Why is caring for the Jewish cemeteries of Poland important? As outlined above, 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* (חסד של אמת) 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

When considering the burial of the dead *gemilut chasadim* (גמילות חסדים), 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).

Clearly, for Christians breaking the cycle of evil rests on them engaging in a significant and loving act that leads to forgiveness and reconciliation with the Jewish community. Deeds of loving-kindness lay the bridge of mercy. The bridge of mercy allows us to connect with the people who have suffered the injustice. It is a way for us 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. When we minister in this *mitzvah* we are addressing a specific and unmet need that is not being met by hardly anyone today, as these Jewish cemeteries lie scattered across Poland uncared for, desolate and decaying.

Tikkun Olam

In redemption, 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).

Summary

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*, 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

Competency 5a: The Shoah and its Impact

Adult Education

One of the two core missions of TMF is to educate the public about the Shoah; therefore, education is an outflow of service for me into the community where I reside and beyond. 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 of The Temple in Atlanta, GA, 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 I mentioned previously as a part of Competency 5a: The Shoah and its Impact, I realized that I formally needed to broaden my knowledge base concerning the Shoah from a historical perspective. So 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 Rabbi Berg and asked him if he would be interested in me leading a seminar on the Holocaust 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 early 2015 following the publication of an article about me and the work of TMF, Rabbi Sokol, a teacher in a local Jewish and private high school, contacted me about speaking to his class about my work to which I agreed (**Artifact:** [Re The Weber School](#)). Although this was a learning environment, I did not classically teach more about the Shoah. I spoke about my response as a Christian to the Shoah and the work of TMF. Following my talk, I engaged the students in a discussion through questions and answers. The rabbi videotaped my talk and uploaded it to (**Verification:** [Weber YouTube](#)). Subsequently, I asked the board of TMF to view

the video and give their feedback and evaluation; I also asked Rabbi Sokol for his feedback as well (**Evaluations:** [Rachel Weber School](#) and [The Weber School March 10, 2015](#)).

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:** [SCC Genocide Conference 4_18_19](#)).

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](#)).

Competency 5b: Jewish Ethics

Love for Others

I have learned that I may connect my understanding of Micah 6:8 and my work with the Jewish community to my Christian theistic worldview. I connected what I have done and what I am doing in caring for and restoring Jewish cemeteries in Poland with the goodness of God—his holiness, or righteousness and his love or loving-kindness for his creation. I had never been able to do something like this previously. I now have a valuable tool to assist me in explaining my work to other Christians. Frequently when I do have the opportunity to explicate what I do to

another Christian or a pastor, they find it difficult to grasp the concept of what God has led me to do in a Jewish cemetery, because in what I do, they do not see the outcome of conversion from Judaism to Christianity. Commonly one of the first things that a Christian will ask me, is: “How do you get them [Jews] to Christ?” Many Jews are used to being proselytized by Christians regularly, so from the Jewish, perspective, their question typically is: “When are you going to try and convert me?”

When I interact with a Jew, they generally recognize the “holiness” of what I do because caring for the dead is one of the highest expressions of compassion and is keeping one of the commandments (mitzvot) of the *Halacha* (Jewish law comprised of the Torah and rabbinical teachings). Wolf (2010a) traces the etymology of the Hebrew word, *halakhah* (also transliterated as *halakah* and *halakoth*) stating 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;” furthermore, Wolf explains that the purpose of the *halakhah* “was to define Jewish identity in contrast to the surrounding nations” (p. 32).

Nevertheless, because I am *not* a Jew, generally many Jews will ask me: “What's the catch?” Or, “Where's the hook?” The typical Jewish expectation of a Christian is for the Christian to attempt to evangelize them. Instead of proselytizing, I seek to build a bridge through mercy—an act of loving-kindness and thereby to open dialogue with the Jewish community. This is why I think that I have been effectively interacting with the Jewish community for fifteen years (**Verifications:** [Sherrill Parkhurst Thank You](#), [Baptist Pastor Finds Calling](#), [The Bridge Builder](#), [Working towards Reconciliation](#), [2013 Chesed Szel Emet](#), [2013 Chesed Szel Emet Translation](#), [2017 Preserving Memory Award](#), [Recommendation Letter from Rabbi Schudrich](#), and [Schudrich Re Touching Base](#)).

Three Principle Values of TMF

The name “matzevah” (מצבה) comes from a Hebrew word meaning a memorial stone that is placed at the head of a grave facing traditionally toward the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. TMF seeks to remember and honor the Jewish heritage of Poland by restoring Jewish cemeteries and reconciling Jews and Christians through participating in a common “mitzvah”—literally fulfilling one of the commandments from the Torah. Also, the word matzevah resonates with the idea of speaking out or declaring. We see in the Hebrew Scriptures that through the Prophet Habakkuk, God speaks to the injustice of past deeds of those who have “plotted the ruin of many peoples, shaming your own house and forfeiting your life,” and we see for this reason, “the stones of the wall will cry out, and the beams of the woodwork will echo it. Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed and establishes a town by injustice” (Habakkuk 2:10-12) (NIV, 1984).

Thom Wolf (2010b) discusses the “J-shaped spiritual capital of the west,” which grows out of the work of Theodore Malloch (2008) of Yale University (p. 8). Wolf states that Malloch “argues that historically, the spiritual capital of Protestant business persons focuses on the three virtues of faith, hope, and charity” (p. 8). According to Wolf, Malloch subsequently maintains that a “Jesus-shaped *worshipview* [sic] . . . yields a worldview triad of leadership discipline (faith), social compassion (charity), and persevering justice (hope)” (p. 8). Wolf concludes, therefore, that Malloch, et al., think “it is time for Western societies to retrieve, restate, and revitalize the J-shaped spiritual capital of the West” (p. 8).

In many ways, TMF is an emblematic reflection of Malloch’s conclusion. TMF functions in an ethical triad of values derived based on Micah 6:8. We see that God requires us to act justly

(do justice), to love mercy (practice charity) and to walk humbly with God (be humble and faithful to God). From this ethical triad we see the three principle values of TMF:

1. **Remembering**—means to bring back to memory the past. It is important to remember the past and to remember the history, heritage, and culture of the Jewish people and their contributions to Polish and Jewish history. TMF desires to speak to the injustice of the Shoah by acting justly through remembering and honoring the victims of the Shoah by facilitating and conducting Jewish cemetery restoration projects in Poland. Through our just actions, we can preserve justice and build hope for the future.
2. **Restoring**—means returning to a former state of being. As a group of Christians, TMF can deal with the painful past of the Shoah today by seeking to bring Jew and Christian together in a mutual mitzvah to care for and restore Polish Jewish cemeteries. By loving mercy, as seen in this simple act, we express God's loving-kindness and demonstrate God's character. As Christians, who are involved with TMF, we are able to show that we care for what is central to Jewish people and more so through expressing mercy (caring acts), we display God's love, which allows forgiveness to emerge.
3. **Reconciling**—means bringing together or unifying differing elements. As Christians acting through TMF, we cannot reconcile without first being humble and serving with integrity, as we seek to continue and broaden the dialogue with the Polish Jewish community.

Thus, by acting justly, we remember and honor the victims of the Shoah. By loving mercy, we care for and restore Jewish cemeteries in Poland. Through humility, we approach the

Jewish community attempting to begin the process of rebuilding the relationship between Jews and Christians.

Documentary Film: The Presence of Their Absence

Several years ago, I was approached by a film producer, Donna Kanter, who was working on the documentary about the trauma experienced by the children of Holocaust survivors. We discussed my work as a Christian—an ordained Baptist pastor, working with the Jewish diaspora of Jewish descent to care for and restore their ancestral cemeteries in Poland. Donna was fascinated with my Jewish ethical approach and knowledge of the Shoah. I explained how God led me to work with the Jewish community of Poland, which ultimately led to the establishment of TMF.

Donna was working with Fred Zaidman, who was trying to piece together his parent's family history in Poland before, during, and after the Shoah. He wanted to find the graves of his great grandparents in the Radomsko Jewish cemetery. Donna wanted to tell his story.

Interestingly, I had done research on the trauma experienced by Jews during the Shoah and its impact on their children and others. I wrote a brief paper on this topic as a part of my coursework at Andrews University; in the paper, I addressed secondary trauma—the type of trauma Fred was experiencing (**Artifact:** [An Analysis of Psychology and Holocaust](#)).

Donna asked me if I could help Fred and play a role in his journey of connecting his past with the present. I gladly agreed and we began working on the film immediately. In June 2017, I worked with Fred in the Radomsko Jewish cemetery, and over a period of three days, we found the graves of his great grandparents and two of his great aunts. We also did some clearing and cleaning of the cemetery. The title of the documentary is [*The Presence of Their Absence*](#) and a trailer of the film is available on [YouTube](#); I appear in the trailer about minute 2:17.

In the fall of 2019, we “premiered” the film in Atlanta and screened the film at The Temple on Monday, November 11. *The Atlanta Jewish Times* did a story on the film screening: [*Temple Plays Role in Film About Restoring Polish Graves*](#). Our non-profit, TMF, took advantage of the film screening in Atlanta, where I live, and in Nashville, where many of our board members reside. In Atlanta, I was a part of a panel discussion following the film, and the next day, Donna, Fred, and I were invited to speak to high school students at the Lovett School. In Nashville, our board members organized and led a screening of the film at the Brentwood Public Library. All of these opportunities were monumental for us as an organization. So much so, our director of media and communications, Rachel McRae produced content from these events for two of our newsletters (**Artifacts:** [A Monumentally Fun Week TMF Newsletter](#) and [Nashville screening TMF Newsletter](#)).

Serving Others (Sharing)

My leadership function is primarily focused on interacting with Polish Jews and American Jews but includes also working with Polish and American Christians. I discovered a concept that describes what I have been doing in working in Jewish cemeteries. It is termed, *Shabbos Goyim*, which is a Yiddish term for a “non-Jew, who is paid a small fee” to handle tasks that a religious Jew cannot perform on the Sabbath (Lehrer, 2013, p. 127). Lehrer applies this concept to those who are entrusted with caring for Jewish culture as stewards. Additionally, connected to this concept, she introduces another term, *surrogation*, which concerns the re-creation of culture “as actual or perceived vacancies occur in the network of relationships” that make up the “social fabric” (p. 127).

Moreover, I have recently learned a new term for a rabbi that better describes my relationship and interaction with the Polish-Jewish community in Poland and in the diaspora.

According to Agnew (1986), the word *shaliach* or *saliah* is a Hebrew term that “is not found in the [Tanakh or Old Testament] and came to prominence in the rabbinic period” (p. 80). It designates one who is “trusted with the authority of [their] employer when taking messages” (Browning, 2009, p. xxxix). Consequently, *shaliach/saliah* embraces the concept of serving as an emissary (Aharonov, 2015, p. 190) and has embedded within it, according to Agnew (1986), the “technical implication to describe a commissioned agent, one sent to act in the name of another” (p. 80). Even though such emissaries, as Aharonov (2015) suggests, “usually had a specific goal in their missions . . . they also served as a direct and living link” connecting the one who sent them and the community to where they were sent (Aharonov, 2015, p. 190).

This latter consideration is significant as a consideration for the work that I do with the Polish-Jewish community to care for and restore their ancestral cemeteries in Poland. As a servant leader, I view my work in Jewish cemeteries as being cultural stewardship. I serve the purpose of reconnecting Jews with their origins, as well as, assisting them in dealing with the past to understand the present. I find myself, as a servant-leader, being in a middle space; I am between the Jew and the Gentile-Christian.

Conclusion

In Luke 10:25-37 (NIV, 1984), the so-called parable of the “Good Samaritan,” we see that an outcast did the right thing, and expected nothing in return. What he did was astonishing because he was understood by his audience as an outsider, as one, who did not live properly accordingly the audience’s moral or religious standard, i.e. according to their worldview. Jesus used this parable to emphasize the point that righteous behavior—doing what is right, is not a matter of religious identity or worldview perspective. Mercy is a matter of the heart. Compassion flows from God not from how we view the world.

It is my purpose to allow the heart of God to flow through me, as I work and lead others to care for and restore Jewish cemeteries in Poland. Why do we do such work? We seek to honor and preserve the Jewish heritage of Poland. We do this work as a means to open dialogue and pursue reconciliation between Jews and Christians. The restoration work that we do is not merely about restoring or redeeming physical spaces, or their status within a particular community, but it is more so about restoring and redeeming broken relationships between people.

I have used elements within the realm of this competency to shape my historical and ethical understanding Shoah and its impact on Jews, whose family roots are in Poland. Consequently, I have developed my intellectual knowledge of the Shoah, while at the same time I investigated and deepened my ethical competency within the framework of Jewish ethics. Both these aspects of this competency—the historical and ethical, intersect with my work in leading TMF. Without the development of my leadership competency in these two dimensions, I do not think that I would have been able to lead and develop TMF over the past nine years into the successful organization that it is today.

Documentation of Competency

Artifacts

1. [Certified Articles of Incorporation](#)
2. [TMF Vision Mission Statements](#)
3. [Reece SWBTS Transcript](#)
4. [Project Nehemiah](#)
5. [A Summary Ordinary Poles Look at the Jews](#)
6. [Reece Short Annotated Bibliography](#)
7. [BR Contested Memories Steven Reece](#)
8. [Holocaust I Syllabus](#)
9. [Holocaust II Syllabus](#)
10. [LEAD 756 Jewish Ethics Course Syllabus](#)
11. [The Matzevah Foundation 25 Oct 2015](#)
12. [Jewish and Ethical Basis for TMF](#)
13. [Micah 6:8 and Academic Parallels](#)
14. [2012.9 2 MERCY REECE](#)
15. [Orientation Polish History](#)
16. [Culture and Orientation for Printing](#)
17. [Holocaust Seminar Idea](#)
18. [Re Holocaust Education](#)
19. [Syllabus Jewish and Christian Perspectives](#)
20. [Voices of the Holocaust PART 1](#)
21. [Voices of the Holocaust PART 2](#)
22. [Re The Weber School](#)
23. [SCC Genocide Awareness Invitation](#)
24. [SCC Genocide Conf Brochure](#)
25. [An Analysis of Psychology and Holocaust](#)
26. [A Monumentally Fun Week TMF Newsletter](#)
27. [Nashville screening TMF Newsletter](#)

Verifications and Evaluations

1. [Holocaust I Course Certificate](#)
2. [Holocaust II Course Certificate](#)
3. [EJC 2015 Conf Brochure](#)
4. [Ref Letter for Steven](#)
5. [RE Appreciation and Request](#)
6. [RE Shoah](#)
7. [Re Shoah 2](#)
8. [RE Shoah 3](#)
9. [Evaluation Jan](#)
10. [Evaluation Jan 2019](#)
11. [The Third Space: The Meeting of Jew and Christian in the Act of Remembering, Restoring, and Reconciling - A Case Study of the Matzevah Foundation](#)
12. [Weber YouTube](#)
13. [Rachel: Weber School](#)
14. [The Weber School March 10, 2015](#)
15. [2019 SCC Genocide Awareness Conf Certificate](#)
16. [SCC Feedback](#)
17. [Sherrill Parkhurst Thank You](#)
18. [Baptist pastor finds calling](#)
19. [The Bridge Builder](#)
20. [Working towards Reconciliation](#)
21. [2013 Chesed Szel Emet](#)
22. [2013 Chesed Szel Emet Translation](#)
23. [EJC 2015 Conf Brochure](#)
24. [2017 Preserving Memory Award](#)
25. [Recommendation Letter from Rabbi Schudrich](#)
26. [Schudrich Re Touching Base](#)

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