

Jewish and Christian Perspectives of the Holocaust

Syllabus

The seminar is comprised of five sessions lasting approximately one hour each.

1. Voices of Jewish life in Poland prior to WW2

We will focus on the 800 years of flourishing Jewish life in Poland, highlighted by drawing upon various historical documents, films, and other resources. Part of our discussion will involve the relationships between Jews and non-Jews, in the major cities vs. the smaller towns.

2. Voices of Christian Poles in prewar Poland

Jews found sanctuary and thrived in Poland as nowhere else in Europe; nonetheless, Jews were perceived as the “others” by their Christian neighbors. What major factors shaped the Polish-Christian view point and why did Polish Christians “stand idly by” when the Nazi persecution began? Among all European countries, Poland has the highest number of Righteous Among the Nations.

3. Voices of the Holocaust

While providing a review of the Holocaust, going back to Germany in 1933, we will emphasize the very-real differences of Jewish life – and death -- in Poland compared to other European countries.

4. Voices of current Christians associated with Poland

How have Christians responded to injustice of the Holocaust and the absence of their former Jewish neighbors? Share several anecdotal snapshots of contemporary Christian response focusing to some degree on the work of The Matzevah Foundation.

5. Voices of Polish Jews and rebirth of Jewish life in Poland

We lost two generations of Jews in Poland, first with the Holocaust and then under the Communists. So many young people are just now discovering their Jewish roots. They are seeking information about what it even means to be Jewish, and some are actually converting to Judaism. There are a growing number of Jewish institutions to help them do so.

About the Instructors

- Jan Jaben-Eilon:

A long-time journalist who also worked in the Atlanta Jewish community, Jan holds both American and Israeli citizenship. While living in Israel, she took a 30-

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day course on how to teach the Holocaust. When she moved back to the States, she created curriculum and taught the Holocaust to both young people and adults. In Atlanta, she taught the teens in preparation for the March of the Living trip. Jan has toured concentration and death camps in both Germany and Poland, where she also has been involved in the growing Jewish community in Warsaw.

- Steven D. Reece:

Steven D. Reece worked as professional photojournalist before entering religious and charitable work. He currently leads The Matzevah Foundation, Inc., a nonprofit organization established by a group of Christians that seeks to remember, preserve, and honor the Jewish heritage of Poland through caring for and restoring Jewish cemeteries.

The Matzevah Foundation cooperates closely with the Rabbinical Council for Matters of Jewish Cemeteries and the Jewish Community of Poland; TMF partners directly with the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage (FODZ), the Foundation of the Forgotten, the Auschwitz Jewish Center, and the Centre for Archeology at Staffordshire University (UK).

Steven is a graduate of Baylor University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Presently, he is a candidate for the PhD in Leadership at Andrews University.

Most recently, Steven became an advisor for the European Jewish Cemeteries Advisory Network (EJCAN). [EJCAN](#) is a network "of more than 30 international experts representing a range of professional skills and expertise related to Jewish cemeteries who can be contacted for advice on a number of issues." Steven received certification for completing a 6 week course on the Shoah through Yad Vashem and Tel Aviv University.