

JEWISH AND ETHICAL VALUES OF TMF

Jewish and Ethical Values Undergirding the Work of The Matzevah Foundation

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by

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Introduction

The name “matzevah” (מצבה) is derived from a Hebrew word meaning a memorial stone or monument that is erected in memory of a significant event or placed at the head of a grave. In Jewish cemeteries, the stone or matzevah signifies remembering and honoring the deceased and ensures that the grave will not be desecrated. This understanding eloquently captures the vision and purpose of The Matzevah Foundation (TMF). TMF is a not-for-profit corporation, which is governed by bylaws as determined by the State of Georgia and outlined in its Documents of Incorporation. TMF is a 501(C)(3), tax-exempt organization recognized by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as a public charity. Along with a group of Christian friends, I led in the development and establishment of TMF in late 2010 as an extension of the work that I began with the Polish Jewish community of Warsaw in 2005 while I was working with the Baptist Union of Poland.

As an organization, TMF has been operating for nearly ten years along clearly developed vision and purpose statements. However, I desire to lead and undergird the work of TMF with exceptional values derived from Scripture and its underlying Jewish heritage allowing TMF to operate consciously and intentionally within a scriptural and Jewish ethical perspective. Additionally, it is my desire to link these primary scriptural and Jewish understanding of these values to my ethical leadership as a means to undergird and direct the work of TMF. This paper, therefore, will be divided into three parts. In Chapter 1, I will address matters concerning the Shoah and my response to it; I will also present a brief history and overview of TMF and its vision and purpose. Chapter 2 will briefly treat the scriptural and Jewish values, or ethical framework that support the work of TMF, while Chapter 3 will consider these values and their implications for organizational ethics in relationship to TMF.

CHAPTER 1

The Shoah and its Impact

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. 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).

These stark Jewish views of Christianity and its role in the Shoah have been mitigated to some degree by developments in Jewish-Christian relations during the latter half of the Twentieth Century. Michael Kress (2012) views Jewish-Christian interaction as primarily improving because Christians have completely re-evaluated their “attitude toward Jews and Judaism” (para. 1), which has revolutionized the relationship between these two religious groups. 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).

In addition, 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” (para. 4).

Interfaith dialogue among Jews and Christians “has become commonplace” (Karpen, 2002, p. 4); even so, it continues to be strained and inhibited due to factors, such as the Shoah and the Christian response to it. Jewish and Christian interaction is strained due to the Shoah; therefore, in order to open a dialogue with the Jewish community toward reconciliation, Christians must deal with the legacy of the Shoah. Metz (1978) argues, “We Christians will never get back behind Auschwitz and, seen accurately, beyond Auschwitz only, no longer alone, but only with the victims” (para. 5).

Christian Response to the Shoah

How should Christians respond today to the Shoah? Kapren 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” (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?

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).

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).

An Overview of The Matzevah Foundation

A Brief History

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.

Summary

The work of TMF grew out of my consideration of what my response to Shoah should be as a Christian. My response led me to care for and restore the Jewish cemeteries in Poland and ultimately it led me to mobilize and engage other Christians to cooperate with the Jewish community of Polish descent in caring for the more than 1,400 Jewish cemeteries in Poland. Along with a group of Christian friends, we established TMF in late 2010, as a way for us to continue the work that I began in Poland. TMF exists to educate the public about the Shoah, to care for and restore Jewish cemeteries, and to commemorate the lives of innocent Jewish victims murdered in the Shoah.

CHAPTER 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

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

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.

wrong, we expressed justice in response to the injustice of what occurred during the Shoah to the European and Polish Jews.

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.

Ethical Triad of TMF

Once more, I return to Wolf (2010b) where he discusses the “J-shaped spiritual capital” (p. 8), which grows out of the work of Theodore Malloch. Wolf writes,

[Malloch] argues 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).

Additionally, Wolf concludes,

Malloch and others see the 1990s impoverishment and implosion of the Communist empire . . . as West-wide indicators that it is time for Western societies to retrieve, restate, and revitalize the J-shaped spiritual capital of the West (p. 8).

TMF functions in a similar ethical manner and operates out of an ethical triad of values derived from Micah 6:8 in which 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 principle values of TMF: remembering, restoring, and reconciling.

Remembering

Remembering—means to bring back to memory the past. By remembering we stand alongside Jews as witnesses to the wrongs that have been committed against them—injustice and deal with the *weeds* of 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 are able to preserve justice and build hope for the future.

Restoring

Restoring—means returning to a former state of being. What is important to those who have been treated unjustly? Show you care by doing *deeds*. As a group of Christians, TMF is able to deal with the painful past of the Shoah today by seeking to bridge the gap between Jew and Christian and bring together in a common 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. This type of caring in Hebrew is understood as *chessed shel emet* or "true mercy" or "true loving-kindness."

As Christians, who are involved with TMF, we are able to demonstrate that we care for what is important to Jewish people and more so through expressing mercy (caring acts), we display God's love, which allows forgiveness to emerge.

Reconciling

Reconciling—means bringing together or unifying differing elements. Often, we hear this question: "Why would you a Gentile, do this for us a Jew?" When this question is asked, we may begin to sow truth, i.e. *seeds*, and open a dialogue. 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.

Consequently 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 restoring the relationship between Jews and Christians.

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

Considerations for Organizational Ethics

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

Ethical Agents

Most organizational scholars view organizations as ethical agents because they are frequently organized by individuals who act morally to express their values and visions of what is needed in the world around them. Therefore, organizations may be agents of good or evil depending upon the good and evil that each member brings to the structuring and the development of the organization's purpose. Since people have the capacity to make ethical and unethical decisions, organizations share the same capacity to make these types of decisions and therefore can act for good or evil. Organizations can make critical, ethical decisions regarding its operation. Furthermore, leaders shape the ethics of the organizations that they lead either positively or negatively meaning that the organization will take on the ethical values of its leader. This consideration is crucial because as Trevino, Brown and others indicate, there is a distinct

difference "between ethical leaders and those who are unethical, hypocritical or ethically neutral;" likewise, they argue that "the unethical leader falls short as both a moral person and a moral influence agent" (cited in, Johnson, 2012, p. 318). As a moral and ethical agent leading TMF, I will lead our organization to act morally and ethically.

Ethical Climate

In addition, all organizations have ethical climates that may be categorized into one of five ethical means of operating as described by Victor and Cullen (cited in, Johnson, 2012, p. 320). First, they can be instrumental and be driven by a leader or a group's ego and selfish interests, which leads to a pattern of decision making that is self-serving and based on the needs of an individual, a select group or the organization itself. The organization may next be caring and have an ethical climate that emphasizes concern or care for others. Third organizations may be centered on law and order, in which the ethical climate is characterized by code of conduct and fourth organizations may be driven by rules that govern the ethical environment by policy, rules and regulations. Lastly, ethical organizations may reflect an ethical environment of independence allowing people to have broad ranging freedom to make their own decisions.

Ethical Performance

Organizations must be aware of their ethical performance as Victor and Cullen point out further that "the greatest threat to ethical performance" is "self-interest" (cited in, Johnson, 2012, p. 320). This conclusion supports the fact that people can negatively impact the ethic of the organization that they lead by promoting their own self need and placing it ahead of the organization or those whom the organization serves. In consideration of these five ethical climates, I think that TMF operates from a caring ethical perspective in which we express

concern and care of victims of the Shoah. As Christians, we desire to join and serve Jews by celebrating, who God is and who He created us to be through the mitzvah of caring for Jewish Cemeteries in Poland.

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

Code of Ethics

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

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

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

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

Even though TMF is not legally obligated to have a code of ethics, the IRS may eventually require one to maintain the tax-exempt status of the organization. Paine and Bettcher (2005) enumerate eight ethical principles, which they designate as the “Global Business Standard Codex” (GBS Codex), as a way to create or appraise an ethical code of conduct. The eight principles are The Fiduciary Principle, The Property Principle, The Reliability Principle, The Transparency Principle, The Dignity Principle, The Fairness Principle, The Citizenship Principle, and The Responsiveness Principle (p. 3). Based on the research that I outlined in the above paragraphs, I wrote a code of ethics for TMF, which I presented to the board in March 2013. The board of TMF approved and adopted my proposal as TMF’s Code of Ethics.

Conclusion

My Jewish-ethical approach for leading TMF has led to opportunities to be in dialogue with numerous Jewish organizations in the United States and Poland and to be in dialogue with Jews of Polish origins living in North America, South America, Israel, Australia, India, and Poland. I have been careful to let my yes be yes and my no be no. In other words, I have acted with integrity, which I have modeled and communicated to our board and those who partner with us and to those whom we serve. My commitment to understand Jewish values and act ethically

has led to partnerships with the Rabbinical Commission for Matters of Cemeteries in Poland, Fundacja Zapomniane ((Foundation of the Forgotten), Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland, the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City through its affiliates of the Auschwitz Jewish Center and JewishGen.org, Studnia Pamięci (Well of Memory), Staffordshire University (UK), numerous Jewish descendant's groups, as well as, partnering with several rabbis in our work. Understandably this is no small task, but I am learning and growing in my understanding of Jewish values and how we approach our work ethically.

Our ethical behavior is the basis for how we do what we do. We do our work with humility and integrity. We seek to open a dialogue with the Jewish community as Christians toward reconciliation. I honor the Jews as the root of everything that I know about God and what I do, I do out of love for my neighbor. My motives are pure.

Johnson (2012) points out that "ethical leaders also recognize that if the group is to heal, them must foster hope, while honoring the past" (p. 428). Johnson was referring to a demonstration of ethical care as a part of dealing with crisis management. His statement caught my attention as I considered what TMF has done with the Jewish community. We honor the past and touch the present and bring healing to the broken relationship that exists between these two communities. I see how hope is emerging as I deepen the dialogue.

We are opening a conversation. We are seeking to open a dialogue with both Jews and Christians. We are beginning to dialogue about the true nature of God's love. To me, love is not an abstract thought, nor is love a fleeting emotion. Instead, love is action. Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." And his commandment was best expressed by the deeper matters of the Torah "justice, mercy and faithfulness."

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