

COMPETENCY 1A – PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS

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A Reflection Paper for Competency 1A – Philosophical Foundations

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by

Steven D. Reece

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
CHAPTER 1	5
THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS	5
Definitions of Key Terms	5
Foundational Philosophical Theories.....	7
Metaphysics: The Nature of Reality.....	8
Epistemology: The Question of Knowing.....	9
Worldview Theories.....	9
Personal Worldview Theories	11
Christian Theistic Worldview.....	12
Utilitarian Individualism.....	12
Consumerism	13
Existentialism and Postmodernism.....	14
Summary	15
CHAPTER 2	16
APPLYING THEORY TO PRACTICE.....	16
Connecting Philosophical Theories to My Work.....	16
Application to Jewish Cemeteries	16
Intersection of Theory and Practice	17

Reece: PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS	3
Connecting Worldview Theory to My Leadership Practice	19
Christian Theistic Worldview	19
Micah 6:8: God’s Moral Standard	20
Theistic Existentialism	22
Tribal Postmodernism	23
Summary	24
CHAPTER 3	26
KEY LEARNINGS AND SERVING OTHERS	26
Epistemology, Values, and Behaviors	26
Love for Others	28
Transformation, Restoration, and the Image of God	29
Redemption and Restoration	29
Image of God.....	31
Utilitarian Individualism	32
Serving Others (Sharing)	33
Conclusion	35
Documentation of Competency	38
References	40
References Cited	42

Introduction

Throughout my life, my leadership journey has been shaped by my convictions, my work, and my experiences in life. 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.pdf and TMF Vision Mission Statements v 2.0.pdf). In leading TMF, I have been developing diligently and deepening critically my understanding of cross-cultural issues concerning Jewish and Christian interactions. As such, I have been examining my underlying philosophical and worldview assumptions. My purpose in writing this paper is to connect academic theory to my practice and thereby develop a better philosophical understanding of worldview principles and their leadership application, as they relate to my task of leading and guiding the work of TMF.

CHAPTER 1

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Definitions of Key Terms

Competency 1a: Philosophical foundations. The Andrews University Leadership Department advances a set of leadership competencies, which require students to have “theoretical knowledge and practical application” within a set of “core [leadership] competencies” of which the “leadership of the self” is one group of competencies (*Leadership Handbook*, 2011, p. 36). This first group of leadership competencies addresses “the self awareness and the personal and professional identity required when practicing leadership;” specifically Competency 1A: Philosophical Foundations describes how leadership “functions within the context of multiple perspectives and understands how individual worldview influences practice” (*Leadership Handbook*, 2011, p. 36).

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.

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.

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).

Philosophy. According to Knight (2006), philosophy may be defined as “love of wisdom;” furthermore, he states that philosophy may be considered “in three aspects: an activity, a set of attitudes, and a body of content” (p. 5). Additionally, Knight points out that philosophy may be organized and divided into three primary classes (p. 9):

1. **Metaphysics.** Is the “study of questions concerning the nature of reality.” In metaphysics, philosophers ask questions regarding what is real.
2. **Epistemology.** Is the “study of the nature of truth and knowledge.” Epistemology embraces questions that deal with what is true and how truth is known.
3. **Axiology.** Is the “study of questions of value.” An axiological question asks, “What is of value?” It “has two main branches – ethics and aesthetics.”

Worldview. The term worldview (*Weltanschauung*) was first introduced by Immanuel Kant; 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). The concept of worldview has been championed and advanced by theologians such as Sire and Naugle. 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” (as cited in, Sire, 2009, p. 18). Sire (2009) defines worldview as “a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart . . .” (p. 20). In his book, *Worldview: The History of a Concept*, Naugle (2002) traces the use of the term through not only “Reformed history but also its path through European philosophy” and then deliberates its contemporary uses. Thomson (2012) discusses how “Christian worldview thinking has become an increasingly prominent framework for thinking about education” (p. 179).

Foundational Philosophical Theories

Up until I entered seminary, I never really questioned my worldview, or any of the underlying philosophical assumptions associated with it. Once in seminary, I enrolled in a philosophy of religion course (Artifact: SWBTS Transcript—PHREL-431). It was my first formal exposure to the study of philosophy. I found the course to be rigorously thought-provoking, helpful, and significant in my development as a leader. It was the first time in my life that I was exposed to my underlying worldview and philosophical assumptions, as a person. I was challenged to take my experience in how I responded to life and assess it academically and then to determine my philosophical “stance.” I came to realize that my fundamental philosophical constructs are firstly that I am an idealist, who can be a realist. Secondly, my epistemology is rationalistic (I like reason). Thirdly, concerning my axiology, I value rationality, orderliness, balance, symmetry, morality, light, perfection, life, and persons, but not mystical experiences (Artifact: PHREL_431_FNL.pdf). Presently and due to the nature of my work and

my study at the Ph.D. level, I am more focused on ethics, meaning “moral values and conduct” (Knight, 2006, p. 29). Nevertheless, for this paper, I will concentrate more on the metaphysical and epistemological aspects of my worldview and its place within my philosophical foundations. I will consider to some degree my axiology but not extensively.

Prior to entering the leadership program at Andrews University, my primary philosophical foundations were to be found in a Judeo-Christian, or theistic, worldview. This worldview construct has been shaped within me by my life experience, my study of Scripture, and my theological education and training. As noted, I have never analyzed the philosophical foundations of my worldview. Unquestionably, it is important for me to study philosophy because it addresses issues in life that cannot be quantitatively analyzed, synthesized, collated, and “demonstrated empirically” (Knight, 2006, p. 6). Philosophy addresses life questions that relate to meaning and purpose; instead of asking how, philosophy asks, “Why?” Personally, I resonate with asking the “right” philosophical questions as Van Cleve Morris theorizes (as cited in, Knight, 2006, p. 9). As a growing philosopher, my pattern has been to ask questions instead of seeking answers. I tend to ask good questions that “are meaningful and relevant” (Knight, 2006, p. 9). People have said to me on several occasions that I challenge them to think by asking them good questions. So for me, I think that as I learn more about my philosophical assumptions, I will become more skilled in asking questions “sparking a great public dialogue” (Cremin, as cited in Knight, 2006, p. 4) about Shoah education.

Metaphysics: The Nature of Reality

Determining what is ultimately real is difficult due to the limitations of our experience. Therefore, determining what is real is essentially an act of faith or believing something to be true, real, or trustworthy based on one's own convictions. What is real? What is the basis for

knowledge? These are the two major questions of philosophy that face me presently in considering my leadership development. Generally, when dealing with reality and truth, I firstly have to determine for myself if truth is relative or absolute and then secondly, if knowledge is subjective or objective. As I indicated earlier, I am an idealist at heart but I also entertain a strong tendency toward being a realist. As an idealist, Knight (2006) indicates that I seek to grasp truth as an idea apart from my experience (p. 46). For an idealist, truth is absolute. I like contrast and things being black and white. Consequently, I tend pursue perfection first of all, because the “ideal person is perfect” (Knight, 2006, p. 48) and secondly due to the fact that Jesus commands his followers in Matthew 5:48 to “be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (NIV, 1984). I realize that I truly live in the real world and from time to time I must sacrifice my idealism in order to do what I need to do—life goes on.

Epistemology: The Question of Knowing

When it comes to knowing, the question becomes: is knowledge subjective or objective? Normally, I would say that for me that reason and logic are important. We can know truth objectively, I tend to be rationalistic in my epistemology. I would agree with Jones (2005) that “truth is the first essential to knowledge” (as well is faith) (p. 17); however, according to Scripture, I would add that “for what can be *known* about God is plain” and “his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been *clearly perceived*,” Romans 1:19-20 (NIV, 1984). What is essentially true for me is that knowing involves perception.

Worldview Theories

I interact with people primarily in the theistic Christian and theistic Non-Christian (Judaistic) worldviews, that is, the world of Christians and Jews. However, I also interact with

moral relativism and postmodernism frequently in my work. In my readings concerning worldview theories, I began with what was more familiar to me and progressed to the unfamiliar. I was most unfamiliar with existentialism and somewhat familiar with postmodernism.

Since I tend to gravitate towards idealism, Knight (2006) indicates that in idealism, truth “is inherent” and “independent of experience” (p. 46). However, I also express a tendency towards realism. For a realist, truth is an “observable fact” and “Natural Law” is “built into the nature of reality” (p. 51). Modernism is an attempt to understand the world through reason (logic) and as Knight points out, Western thinkers “have placed too much optimism in the unaided abilities on the human mind” (p. 99). Postmodernism is a reaction to modernistic thinking; its thinkers have been mostly encouraged by Nietzsche to “create their own world” (as cited in, Knight, 2006, p. 91).

Moral relativism is closely related to both existentialism and postmodernism. The key component of moral relativism, according to Bloom (1987), is “that truth is relative” (as cited in, Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 79), which is an outflow of the everchanging undercurrents of existentialism and postmodernism. Melé and Sánchez-Runde (2013) present arguments for developing universal global ethics for business in a culturally diverse world. They note initially that Donaldson (1996), Jhingran (2001), Frederick (2002), Vendemiati (2008) and others consider differences in moral judgments and perceptions throughout world cultures. These differences produce tension between what they term “moral universalism” and “moral cultural relativism” (cited in, Melé & Sánchez-Runde, 2013, p. 681).

Moral universalism is seen in terms of “universal ethical principles or standards,” while moral cultural relativism is viewed as “local or cultural ethical norms” as being “the exclusive source of ethical standards” (p. 681). Krausz (1989) contends that moral relativism is favored

among some ethicists whereas other ethicists reject a relativistic morality and embrace moral universalism (as cited in, Melé & Sánchez-Runde, 2013, p. 682). Donaldson (1996) and Gowans (2012) represent a third group of ethicists, who advocate a balanced position between these ethical view points and propose “a set of basic ethical values or principles, and particular cultural norms;” on the other hand, other ethicists within this third group such as Küng (1998) and ITC (2009) wish to discover an “empirical or philosophical bases to promote global ethics” (cited in, Melé & Sánchez-Runde, 2013, p. 682).

I point out these statements because they reflect my journey to understand my worldview and to make sense of what I am doing in my work in leading TMF. I will explain my worldview more fully below, but for now it is enough to state that I operate out of a Christian theistic worldview. As such, I hold to a value or moral system that is not relative but absolute and universal, because I am convinced that God is the ultimate source of good, love, truth, justice, and mercy. However I am not so rigid in my convictions that I hold these convictions absolutely to the point that I cannot entertain the views of other people, who may differ from me.

Personal Worldview Theories

I readily admit that I see my worldview as a “commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart” (Sire, 2009, p. 11). Moreover, my worldview is biased, as all of ours are; nevertheless, the real issue is whether or not we are “aware of them and [are] able to think critically about them” (Anderson, 2014, p. 16). I hold “convictional beliefs about the nature of reality” and how they shaped my belief of what I “should or should not do” (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 21). I comprehend that my worldview has been shaped by my experiences, my convictions, and my personal story. My identity has given me an “interpretive grid,” which enables me to assess “the value and importance of various ‘others’” (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 19), whom I have

encountered in my life. The latter conclusion is significant for me in my interaction with the Jewish community because it allows me to “understand and interpret the world” in which they live, while at the same time allowing me to “articulate [my] worldview” to them in terms that they may understand (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 20).

Christian Theistic Worldview

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 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).

Utilitarian Individualism

One other dimension of my worldview is individualism. The worldview of individualism sees in itself that “each individual person constitutes the center of one’s universe” (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, pp. 28-29). In light of individualism, I see myself “as a type of story about who [I] should be” (p. 28). In light of my primary worldview of Christian theism, I do not see myself as the “*pepek swiata*,” a Polish axiom meaning the “belly button of the world.” As an alternative,

I see myself as someone, who is trying serve God and to make a difference by addressing the injustice of the Shoah. While I pursue my purpose, I know that I am not a “Lone Ranger.” I cannot do what I do as a leader alone. I must engage other people. Robert Bellah (1985, 1996), et. al., posit that American individualism has two forms: “utilitarian individualism” and “expressive individualism” (as cited in, Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 28). Utilitarian individualism is orientated toward “personal achievement and material success,” while it pursues “the social good,” which flows automatically from “the individual pursuit of one’s own interests” (p. 28). On the other hand, expressive individualism “worships the freedom to express our uniqueness against constraints and conventions” (p. 28).

Hence for me what is fundamentally true are the key elements found within utilitarian individualism because these elements are focused on the initiative of the individual to change the status quo within the rules, guidelines, and traditions of a given setting (Artifact: Working towards Reconciliation _ A Christian’s involvement in Jewish cemetery restoration _ Jewish Heritage Europe.pdf).

Consumerism

An additional aspect of the worldviews that I encountered in my reading also resonated with me. Although I do not inherently express consumerism, it is to some degree latently present within my array of worldview perspectives. Wilkens and Sanford (2009) deliberate one positive aspect of consumerism: men and women are stewards of God’s creation, meaning that they “act for the benefit of creation” and must use its resources “wisely and with a view to the concerns of the owner” (p. 58). I think that generally Christians misunderstand biblical stewardship. Stewards own nothing and control nothing. Stewards are only servants that have in many ways more responsibility. A steward is a servant, who is entrusted with caring for something that does

not belong to her or him (e.g., Luke 13:1-9). From the understanding that I am God's steward flows the idea of a stewardship based on caring and being an intercessor and for me being someone who seeks reconciliation with the Jewish people.

Existentialism and Postmodernism

In Sire (2009), existentialism is in essence is an attempt “to transcend nihilism” and “is not a full-fledged worldview” (pp. 117-118). It has two expressions: atheistic existentialism and theistic existentialism. I express a few elements of theistic existentialism in my worldview. Martin Buber was a theistic existentialist and his concepts of *I-Thou* and *I-It* distinguishes “between the two ways a person relates to reality. The *I-It* reflects the exchange of a human being with objective reality, the *I-Thou* represents a relationship in which “a subject encounters a subject” (as cited in, Sire, 2009, p. 134). The latter is a personal encounter between subjects. I connect with existential theism at this point primarily. Harold Englund secondly distinguished between two aspects of Christianity: “depersonalized,” dead orthodoxy and “personalized . . . live theistic existentialism” (as cited in, Sire, 2009, p. 135). I relate to God as a person and not according to a set of propositional truths.

I embrace postmodernism because it explains my reaction to modernism and why I have broken with my Baptist-Christian tribe. “Modernism rejects cultural particularities and seeks to absorb unique practices in something that is more universal” (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 146). I see how postmodernism can offer me as a follower of Christ Jesus a useful tool for the “appraisal of modernism” (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 149)

Summary

I operate primarily out of a Christian theistic worldview, which sees God as the Creator and Sustainer of the universe and the source of holiness and righteousness and consequently sees him as being the moral standard of the universe. I believe in the resurrection of Christ Jesus. I live my life to serve God, which means living my life to serve God. Nevertheless, I am influenced by individualism but more so in a positive way as seen in utilitarian individualism. Utilitarian individualism pursues personal goals and success but it is mitigated by its pursuit of what is good for society in terms of “the individual pursuit of one’s own interests” (p. 28). I do not inherently express consumerism, but I resonate with one positive aspect of it that Wilkens and Sanford (2009) introduce. They indicate that men and women are stewards of God’s creation, meaning that they “act for the benefit of creation” and must use its resources “wisely and with a view to the concerns of the owner” (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 58). I see myself as a steward of God’s creation. Lastly, I express existential elements and postmodern views as additional aspects of my worldview due to the fact that I relate to God as a person and not simply according to a set of doctrinal truths.

CHAPTER 2

APPLYING THEORY TO PRACTICE

Connecting Philosophical Theories to My Work

When it comes to applying my theoretical understanding of philosophy to my leadership, I would say that I have learned to take the ideas—or the theories of leadership (*what should be*) and put them into practice in a real world (*what is*). How do I see theory and practice coming together? I am a practitioner obviously, who needed to develop a solid theoretical foundation from which to operate in the work that I lead. What I have learned about the philosophical theories that I have encountered has allowed me to learn and develop my knowledge base, reflect, and apply these theoretical elements to my practice now and going forward.

Application to Jewish Cemeteries

Since, I began working with the Jewish community of Polish origins to care for and restore Jewish cemeteries, I did not have any real idea about how to lead people to do such work. I had to approach my leadership on a trial and error basis. Maybe my approach initially may have been a little more scientific or rationalistic; however, a great deal of what I learned, I learned through observation, i.e. my perception of the world around me. Additionally, I also learned a great deal experientially regarding my work with the Jewish community. I encountered and

learned concepts concerning my work in Jewish cemeteries and regarding the Jewish Law (Halacha) and traditions by translating for a man from the Rabbinical Commission for Matters of Cemeteries. I invited Aleks to teach our Baptist volunteers about the Halacha, Jewish burial practices, and why it was important to work in Jewish cemeteries. Everything that I learned about Jewish cemeteries, the Halacha, Jewish traditions, etc., I learned from him practically, as I wrestled with terminology and concepts in translating from Polish to English. (Artifacts: Aleks Notes on Jewish Cemeteries.pdf and Steven-Alex2.jpg).

Realism involves inductive reasoning to assess the surrounding world in order to determine “general principles from observation” (Knight, 2006, p. 51). So for me to unravel the complexity of the Jewish world in which I was working, I had to examine it and determine how it worked. I began to develop a set of principles by which I operated until I entered the Ph.D. leadership program at Andrews in 2011. Primarily in the work that I led, I operated out of establishing a common vision and working toward that vision. Methodology, that is, how to do the work (means), was not the issue. The issue was to what purpose was God leading me and the people that I was leading? I had to learn, along the way via “on the job training” or “OJT” (Artifacts: Project Nehemiah 2011.pdf and TMF Meeting with Dr. Wolf_03_08_11.pdf).

Intersection of Theory and Practice

When I began my Ph.D., I had the false assumption that I would study some aspect of my work and arrive at some definitive truth about “how” to do what I was doing and somehow validate my work. Instead, I am learning about the process of what I have experienced and its potential value for others who deal with conflict or tragic situations. According to Kolb, Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) advances a theory that “helps to explain how experience is transformed into learning and reliable knowledge” (p. xxi). Kolb ties ELT to the work of Dewey,

Lewin, and Piaget; he also connects experience to ELT because it emphasizes “the central role that experience plays in the learning process” (p. 31). Learning according to Kolb may be defined as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (p. 49).

Here I believe I find the academic intersection of theory and my practice. I think from Kolb, I am seeing how knowledge is being created by the transformation of my experience in my life and the development of my philosophical positions and my understanding of my worldview. When I entered the Andrews Leadership Program, I began to encounter various ideas of leadership. I started to learn and develop my leadership by applying concepts and principles of leadership theory to my work. One particular leadership theory with which I experimented is the theory of transformational, or transformative leadership, and servant leadership (Artifact: Transformational Lead Theory_FA2012-LEAD-645-999 Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership.pdf). Someone, whom I once led in one of my early leadership roles, said of me as a leader, that I am like Gandalf, the wizard-leader from J. R. R. Tolkien's novel *The Lord of the Rings*. He said, “You’re like Gandalf; you see what no one else sees. You recognize what is wrong and you work to correct it. You emphasize what we share in common and seek to unite warring factions asking them to put aside their differences and work toward a common purpose – what is best for all.” I am not a wizard by any means but I am a leader who resonates with what Gandalf did in the Tolkien stories.

I have always liked the metaphor of Gandalf concerning my leadership because it describes well what I try to do as a leader in challenging the status quo and changing it through collaborative action. However, I did not realize why I resonated with it until I read the theories about transformational leadership. According to James McGregor Burns transformational

leadership is a form of leadership that “changes the status quo by appealing to follower’s values and their sense of higher purpose” (Hughes & Curphy, 2012, p. 577). I find this type of leadership important because, in order to deal with change or changing the status quo, transformational leaders must be able to identify what is presently wrong and present a “compelling vision” (Hughes & Curphy, 2012, p. 577) of what could be for the group, organization, or society. As Hughes (2012) emphasizes and what I find most appealing is the fact that “transformational leadership is ultimately a moral exercise in that it raises the standard of human conduct” (p. 577). As Gandalf galvanized warring men and women to fight against the coming oppression of “Middle Earth” in *The Lord of the Rings*, I must lead men and women to transform our status quo and advance our mutual work toward a better tomorrow (Artifact: A14 Reece_Reg Group Presentation.pdf).

Connecting Worldview Theory to My Leadership Practice

Christian Theistic Worldview

Since I hold to a theistic Christian worldview, my primary worldview assumption is that “God is good,” which is seen in two dimensions of his character, that is, “through holiness and through love” (Sire, 2009, p. 30). Firstly, 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). 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) theorizes, that I should live out and understand my worldview in “an attitude of humility,” so that I will not be tempted by my own desire for power (p. 281).

Micah 6:8: God's Moral Standard

I see that Micah 6:8 has become for me the key outflow of God's holiness—his righteousness, and love – extending his favor to other people in my life. In Micah 6:8, we see potentially a God encoded, moral standard and behavior pattern for humanity. This pattern is characterized by the following: to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk 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 (as cited in Krondorfer, 2012, p. 308) writes that “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.”

In Micah 6:8, we see that mercy is derived from the Hebrew work, *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. In view of altruism or love of neighbor, Johnson (2012) emphasizes this ethical consideration as “the ultimate ethical standard” (p. 170). The Jewish Talmud considers compassion (concern for others) 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 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 (Artifact: 2012.9_2_MERCY_REECE.pdf).

Loving-kindness

The Hebrew word, *tzedakah* (charity) is derived from the word *tzadik*, “meaning righteousness, fairness or justice” and “refers to the religious obligation to perform charity, and philanthropic acts, which Judaism emphasizes, are important parts of living a spiritual life” (“Tzedakah,” 2012) (see also, Telushkin, 2009, pp. 156-157). We see that this ethical consideration is mirrored in altruism. However, the Jewish concept of *gemilut chesed* expresses a much deeper concern for those around us through acts of loving-kindness. Telushkin (2001) explains that *gemilut chesed* “usually refers to a special type of *mitzvah*, one that is performed with no expectation of reward” (p. 596). Telushkin goes on to elaborate the subtle difference albeit major difference between these two concepts by explaining that a good deed “implies a voluntary act,” while commandment infers “an obligatory” act (p. 553). Telushkin clarifies this difference by stating that Western cultures view voluntary acts “to be on a higher plane than an obligatory one;” however, the Talmud (*Kiddushin 31a*) considers this issue differently: “Greater is he who is commanded and carries out an act, than he who is not commanded, and carries it out” (cited in, Telushkin, 2001, p. 553).

Humility

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” (as cited in, Johnson, 2012, p. 88). Rabbi Telushkin (2006) mirrors this definition of humility and says that humility is “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). Paul says it this way: *“Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment”* (Romans 12:3). In short, as a leader, I should be aware of my limitations as well as my strengths and weaknesses (Artifact: Six Features of Humility_FA2014-LEAD-637-999_Forums_Week 7 Reflection Forum.pdf).

Theistic Existentialism

In my study of worldviews, I discovered something about myself of which I was unaware of previously. To some degree, I embrace a few elements of theistic existentialism in my worldview. This became clear to me when Sire pointed out a comparison made by Harold Englund in the early 1960s regarding the differences between “depersonalized,” dead orthodoxy and “personalized . . . live theistic existentialism” (as cited in, Sire, 2009, p. 135). Basically I have viewed orthodoxy as a set of propositional truths—if A, then B, to which I swore unquestioned allegiance. I began to understand later due to reasons, that I will share briefly, that God is a person and must be known as a person. Instead of presenting undeniably true facts about Christ Jesus and calling that evangelism, I began to see that as a person I was making Christ Jesus known as a person through my values and by how I lived my life. I can explain now why I experienced this shift. It was my reaction to modernism and breaking with my tribe. “Modernism rejects cultural particularities and seeks to absorb unique practices in something that is more universal” (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 146). I see now how postmodernism can offer me as a follower of Christ Jesus a useful tool for the “appraisal of modernism” (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 149).

Tribal Postmodernism

I would like to focus on one aspect of another worldview that I find positive. Wilkens and Sanford (2009) point out how Christians might utilize postmodern tribalism to “recognize dependence on alien definitions of power,” which they may confuse “with spiritual forms of authority” (p. 150). I was brought up in a Southern Baptist church, schooled in Southern Baptist theology, and served as a Southern Baptist minister. As such, I had a preconceived notion that I had all of the answers—some sort of spiritual authority. My reality crumbled when I encountered Polish culture and what Poles reflected to me about how I envisioned myself and operated. One of the greatest lessons that I learned about myself in interacting with Poles is to step outside of my American identity and become a Pole by speaking Polish and seeing things from their perspective. Poles tend to view Americans as problem solvers and experts. One Pole said to me one day, “You are just another American, who thinks that they have all the answers.”

How illuminating this statement can be when it comes to how we approach things as American Christians. I can now understand why this Polish friend viewed me in this manner. Frequently, American patriotism, i.e., loving and supporting America, may be viewed by other people as nationalism—a tendency to believe that America is superior to all other nations. Many American Christians may believe that God is the source of American superiority and, as such, view God thusly “as the absolute authority,” which may lead them to act as if “God has given their country [the United States of America] a special mission to the rest of the world” (p. 64). This religious nationalism may be expressed unknowingly by American Christians; however, it may be perceived readily by others, as in the example, I cite above. After hearing this statement, I began to listen and reflect on what this Pole was saying to me. I did not have all of the answers. I had to become a learner and ask questions about things before I began to try and “lead.” This

example is illustrative of how I was critiquing my modernity, my view of my own cultural and spiritual superiority. In the end, I chose not to buy into this postmodern viewpoint of seeing “the world as competition for social power,” which would allow me “to advance the cause of [my] own group” (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 150).

When I began to consider what would be my response to the Shoah as a Christian, I had to consider the fact that from a Jewish and a postmodern “tribal” perspective, Christians “participated in the systems that supported oppression” (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 151). What this means is that the systematic and administrative marginalization, deportation, and extermination of the Jewish people during World War II occurred in Germany, a Christian country, where “95% of Germans were baptized, tax-paying members of an established Christian church” (Waller, 2007, p. 140). As Wilkens and Sanford (2009) indicate, “sin has a history that becomes ingrained in our social structures” (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009). European Christians did not recognize the unfolding sin of the Nazi social system because “social systems are so deeply embedded in [their] ways of thinking and acting” (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 151). They did not see what was unfolding until it was too late. Consequently, my mission in life, as a Christian, is to pursue rectifying this great injustice. It is not an easy task. I have stepped outside of the status quo of my own Christian community, which provided me “a greater sense of empathy for others” (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 149), meaning the Jews.

Summary

Since I operate primarily from a Christian theistic worldview, I have asked myself this question: How *should* I live my life and lead my work “in order to be consistent with” my Christian theistic worldview (Anderson, 2014, p. 97)? Another way that I have asked myself this question is: What should my response be as a Christian to the Shoah? Anderson (2014) reminds

us that “many people today suffer from a disconnect” in what their stated values and beliefs are and what they actually do” (p. 97). So how do I 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 my life’s calling?

Wilkens and Sanford (2009) conclude that my theistic Christian worldview should be focused on knowing God, which is deeper than knowing the facts about God. My relationship with God and my knowledge of him should change me, transform me literally reshaping, “the rearrangement of [my] identity, convictions, ethics, and actions” (p. 184). I believe that this latter consideration is a key conceptual link for me and my work because my work is about transformation, literally redemption, or as Wilkens and Sanford (2009) consider that redemption contains within it “the basic idea of restoration” (p. 196). My life’s work is to restore the broken relationship between Jew and Christian “to a new condition” (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 196). What will this “new condition” look like? I do not know. What I am learning however at this point is that the work of restoration is a process and not a product.

CHAPTER 3

KEY LEARNINGS AND SERVING OTHERS

Epistemology, Values, and Behaviors

Since I tend to be rationalistic, I see truth objectively. I prefer things to be clearly 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. Cooper (2006) points out 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 important consideration 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 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 is an outgrowth of my rationalistic viewpoint; however, this does not mean that I am dismissive of other viewpoints. 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. One useful skill (among many noted) was that of being able “to separate ideas and personalities” instead of “lumping ideas and personalities together” condemning both (Cooper, 2006, 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 own 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 ideas. We should not be judgmental and discount an idea because it is coming from a person from some other culture or from 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 moral 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).

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 worldview. 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 explain what I do to another Christian or to 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 on a regular basis, 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 literally keeping one of the commandments (mitzvot) of the *Halacha* (Jewish law comprised of the Torah and rabbinical teachings). Wolf (2010) 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. I will address

this further in the below Section: Redemption and Restoration. But for now, I will state that 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 Jewish community for nearly twelve years (Minister Builds Bridges One Grave at a Time - Atlanta Jewish Times.pdf, The Bridge Builder January 26- 30-33.pdf, Forum Pamięci 2013 Chesed Szel Emet.pdf, and EJC 2015 Conf_Brochure.pdf).

Transformation, Restoration, and the Image of God

I previously connected what I have done and what I am doing in caring for and restoring Jewish cemeteries in Poland with my theistic Christian worldview. Specifically, I connected my work to the goodness of God—his holiness, or righteousness and his love, or loving-kindness for his creation. I learned that one other feature of this worldview perspective is that “the goal of a Christian worldview is transformation, the rearrangement of our identity, convictions, ethics, and actions” (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 184). A third aspect that I have come to understand is that of being created in the “image of God,” which relates to my “task of representing God’s interests in creation” (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 185) (Artifact: Image of God_FA2012-LEAD-645-999_Forum POST #9_Do we need God to be ethical.pdf).

Redemption and Restoration

In redemptions, God acts to redeem his creation. Restoration is a concept in which something becomes “corrupt and is restored to a new condition” (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 196). Ultimately according to Scripture, redemption is found in Christ Jesus; nevertheless, in Judaism, we find that Jews reject “the messianic claims of Jesus” (Anderson, 2014, p. 68). Jews do not acknowledge the redemptive work of Christ as being God’s redemption. Even so, in

Judaism, we see the concept of restoration (a form of redemption), which is known as *Tikkun Olam*—restoring, restorative works, healing, which literally means in Hebrew “repair of the world” (Sucharov, 2011, p. 172). In contemporary times, “*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).

Here, I may connect the work of restoration as a process, as God’s initiative to my work with the Jewish community in restoring Jewish cemeteries. The point for is me to recognize that Christians cannot “convert” Jews. Simply changing religious practice is not redemption. Christians by and large seek to “evangelize” or what some call “proselytize” Jews. Nicastro Jr (1994) defines proselytism as “aggressive targeting and winning of converts from their (recognized) church [or religious group] to one’s own, especially through improper means” (p. 226). Uzzell (2004) states that in Judaism, mainstream Jewish practice “generally rejects all missionary appeals of any kind to other ethnicities;” furthermore, he argues, “Jews would feel more comfortable if we behaved like them—if we abandoned all efforts to win new Christian converts” (p. 16). The point here is that only God can reveal the truth concerning the Person of Christ. This reality is echoed in one of the statements of *Dabru Emet* (Hebrew, meaning *speaking the truth*); it states, “The humanly irreconcilable difference between Jews and Christians will not be settled until God redeems the entire world as promised in Scripture” (“Dabru Emet: A Jewish statement on Christians and Christianity,” 2000). Instead of seeking Jewish converts, Christians should seek to love the Jewish people and by so doing, demonstrate God’s love, his goodness “to the sheep of his pasture”—Psalm 100:3 (NIV, 1984).

Image of God

Realizing that everyone is created “in the image of God” leads me to understand and address an unpleasant situation in my work. Without going into much detail, I face an adversary. I stand between a group of Jewish descendants and a Polish bureaucrat. The bureaucrat is blocking my attempts to assist this group, who has been pursuing the restoration of a particular Jewish cemetery in Poland for 20 years. The bureaucrat has made some unjust accusations against me personally and the organization that I lead. I am trying to navigate the situation graciously. From my reading I realize that this person is also one of God’s creations and for this reason, I understand that I must treat this person with dignity and respect. However, what this person is doing is unjust and punitive. I realize that I am “called by God” and I must “actively represent his kingdom” in this matter (Wilkins & Sanford, 2009, p. 185). If at all possible, I must attempt to redeem the situation by allowing God’s goodness, his love to transform the situation.

In my leadership journey, I have learned (hopefully well) to deal with my pride and humbly accept my limitations and as a result to be open to the input of others around me. I realize that I do not have all the answers and I do not always have to be the expert and be right. I can say, “I do not know” and I can defer to others. I have also come to realize that I am not the master of my own fate—God is. He has led me down a path which at times I do not like. I wish I could at times choose otherwise, but he has taught me that “the way of man is not in himself, that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps” (Jeremiah 10:23, ESV). God directs my path and not I; therefore, I must trust him. When I grow weary as a leader and I face difficulty, I am mindful of the fact that it is God who directs my path. My prayer is that God will strengthen me and give me his peace as I stay in step with him and follow the path that he has set before me.

Utilitarian Individualism

One negative aspect of individualism is self-absorption or simply being selfish and focused only on individual needs. The individual is supreme and above all others. Since, I tend to be individualistic, I have learned that I must adjust and adapt my life to the circumstances in which I find myself and not seek to change the circumstances in order to suit what is “*best*” for me. I must change and be like water, adjusting my life to fit the shape of the space in which I find myself. This pattern of change has expressed itself on numerous occasions in my leadership journey. One struggle that I have in my leadership pattern is placing priority of task (work) over people or relationships with people. Throughout my life, my personal identity has been strongly defined by performance or by what I produce, which is reflected in my effort to do well and be recognized for it. I have won many performance or achievement awards for my work. I have won major awards in photography and journalism and have had photographs published world-wide in magazines and newspapers. So, my pattern of leadership has always been to do things well and to achieve success.

Additionally, individualism “defines my self-worth” by what I produce or by “my performance” (Wilkins & Sanford, 2009, p. 33). I realized after reading Parker Palmer’s 1994 article, *Leading from Within*, that success should not be my motive. Palmer hits on our weakness at looking at the bottom line as the only measure of success and leads us to consider “the great spiritual traditions are not primarily about values and ethics, not primarily about doing right or living well” (Palmer, 1994, p. 3). Instead Palmer (1994) declares that we should allow the spiritual traditions “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). An African saying that I have heard of goes something like this, “If you want to travel fast, travel alone. If you want to travel

far, travel together.” The leadership journey for me has become more important than the destination. I still believe in pursuing excellence as I lead, but how I get there has been shaped differently and governed to a great degree by my cross-cultural experience.

Even though, I have an individualistic worldview, I hold more so to an utilitarian individualistic worldview, which as Bellah, et. al. (1985, 1996) indicate, is orientated toward “personal achievement and material success,” while it pursues “the social good,” which flows automatically from “the individual pursuit of one’s own interests” (as cited in, Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 28). As such, I am a steward, who cares for what God has entrusted me by leading others through utilizing servant and transformational leadership theories, in order to interact with Jews and others in the liminal space of a Jewish cemetery. The key elements of utilitarian individualism are based on the initiative of the individual to change the status quo within the rules, guidelines, and traditions of a given setting.

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. Furthermore 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). 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 deal with the past in order 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.

With regards to leading TMF, I have shared the articles about proselytism with the board of directors of The Matzevah Foundation. I have also written a code of ethics for our organization, which the board approved in March 2013 (Artifact: Agenda for TMF Board Meeting 8-10 March 2013.pdf and Reece 2012 Matzevah Values Final_2.pdf). Organizationally, our ethical behavior is the basis for how we do what we do. We do our work with humility and integrity, but we also understand the sensitive nature of working with Jews who are suspicious of our motives. Accordingly, our organization does not and will not proselytize. Instead we seek to open a dialogue with the Jewish community as Christians towards reconciliation. I have led our board members to honor the Jews as the root of everything that we know about God and what we do, I do out of love for our neighbor. Our motives must be 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. I think that I may apply his statement to what we have done and are doing with the Jewish community. We seek to honor the past and touch the present and bring healing to the broken relationship that exists between the Jewish and the Christian communities. I see how hope is emerging as we as an organization deepen the dialogue that we have with the Jewish community.

Additionally, I shared with my board of directors at our most recent board meeting in March 2017 what I had learned about my Christian worldview and its relationship to our work. Essentially, I shared my post that I wrote about how 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 (Artifact: TMF Board Member World View Smry.pdf).

Concerning the conflict situation that I have had with the Polish bureaucrat that I mentioned about, I presented the situation to our board of directors at our March 2017 board meeting (Re_The termination of the Przerosl project.pdf). We considered options regarding how to address the situation. One option that consistently came to the forefront was that of humility. Sire (2009) posits, I should live out and understand my worldview in “an attitude of humility,” so that I will not be tempted by my own desire of power (p. 281). In confronting and dealing with this unpleasant situation, I have maintained an attitude and position of humility. While in Poland most recently, I met with the Chief Rabbi of Poland in order to seek his advice and counsel on how to resolve this matter. He suggested that we consider positive solutions, such as meeting with the board of directors and suggesting that our two organizations consider a more formal partnership. The positive aspect would be in his view that the board would communicate we are working with the organization that I lead more formally and essentially state: “Work with them and do not obstruct their work.” I told the Chief Rabbi that I was his servant and that I would follow his leadership. I have no power here and I do not wish to rule over the situation. In all humility I am seeking to extend God’s righteous and love into this difficult situation (Artifacts: M Schudrich Meeting with Board of FODZ.pdf and Przerosl Project M Schudrich.pdf).

Conclusion

In considering the my worldview dimensions, I have reconciled my hidden individualism with other facets of my worldview perspectives, and even more so with my Christian theistic worldview of leadership. Leaders are individuals, who lead other people and organizations. If the worldview of individualism sees in itself that “each individual person constitutes the center of

one's universe" (Wilkins & Sanford, 2009, pp. 28-29), then I must consciously be self-aware of this tendency. Therefore, I must temper my individualism and mitigate my tendency to be the center of the universe. I am aware that I must not "cloak [my] selfish intentions" with language that places the focus on the common good (Wilkins & Sanford, 2009, p. 29). As an alternative, I have learned that I must focus upon pursuing what is best for all.

Subsequently, I have discovered two pathways for me to resolve my leadership dilemma. Firstly, although consumerism is not a prevalent feature of my worldview, it offers a proactive course of action. Wilkins and Sanford (2009) deliberate one positive aspect of consumerism: men and women are stewards of God's creation, meaning that they "act for the benefit of creation," and must use its resources "wisely and with a view to the concerns of the owner" (p. 58). It is in this acting "for the benefit of creation" that I find the resolution to my leadership dilemma. As a leader, I exist to serve others, not myself. Leadership, therefore, is a "sacred trust," meaning that leadership has been entrusted to me by God and others. It is very important consequently for me to realize that I am a steward of something given to me for which I am to care. I do not own leadership, nor do I own followers, and for this reason, I am not entitled to any benefits simply because I am the leader.

Secondly, as I referred to earlier in my paper, Sire (2009) addresses the "shift in 'first things' from being to knowing to constructing meaning" (p. 217). As a Christian, my initial response to advances fostered by postmodernism, was to withdraw "into [my own] tribe" instead of becoming compassionate "for others who also feel left out" (Wilkins & Sanford, 2009, p. 149). From my life experiences, my interactions with others, and from my study, I realized that the shift in my life – the shift in my primary worldview perspective, was due to my reaction to modernism. It is for this reason, that I broke with my tribe. I have learned that "modernism

rejects cultural particularities and seeks to absorb unique practices in something that is more universal” (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 146). Despite the fact that I embrace some positive aspects of a postmodern worldview, I do not embrace postmodernism completely. Truth is not relative; it is absolute. Sire (2009) indicates that “a formula for anarchy” may arise from the “postmodern privileging of the self-defining values of individuals and communities” (p. 218). As a Christian, my response to postmodern viewpoints, has not been to withdraw into some sort of isolated bubble. Instead, I embrace those on the fringes of society, “who [may] also feel left out” (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 149).

Furthermore, I see now how postmodernism can offer me, as a follower of Christ Jesus, a useful tool for the “appraisal of modernism” (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 149). I think that my experience reflects a journey in which, as a Christian, I have struggled and learned how to be open to others and how to have a “respect for all people” (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 152), even though, many people with whom I interact hold vastly differing viewpoints from me. Some may view this stance as being moral relativism. It is not. Bloom (1987) argues that “relativism is necessary to openness” and that relativism is “the only plausible stance in the face of various claims to truth and various ways of life and kinds of human beings” (pp. 25-26). Once more, Bloom (1987) reasons that history is replete with examples of how people viewed themselves as being in the right and as such, gave them the right to go war, persecute and enslave others, be fearful of others and be racist. He concludes, “The point is not to correct the mistakes and really be right; rather it is not to think you are right at all (Bloom, 1987, pp. 25-26). I agree. As a human being, I have limited knowledge and understanding of the world around me. So for me, being open to others is more important than being right.

Finally, 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 seen 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.

Documentation of Competency

Artifacts:

1. SWBTS Transcript—PHREL-431
2. PHREL_431_FNL.pdf
3. Coursework LEAD636
 - a. Forum postings
 - b. Forum feedback from classmates
 - c. Assignments
 - d. Course Journal, self-evaluation
 - e. Personal Philosophy Statement
 - f. Personal Worldview Statement
 - g. Reflection Paper, Competency 1A: Philosophical Foundation
 - h. Peer evaluations
4. Working towards Reconciliation_ A Christian’s involvement in Jewish cemetery restoration _ Jewish Heritage Europe.pdf
5. Aleks Notes on Jewish Cemeteries.pdf and Steven-Alex2.jpg
6. Project Nehemiah 2011.pdf and TMF Meeting with Dr. Wolf_03_08_11.pdf
7. Transformational Lead Theory_FA2012-LEAD-645-999 Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership.pdf
8. A14 Reece_Reg Group Presentation.pdf
9. 2012.9_2_MERCY_REECE.pdf
10. Six Features of Humility_FA2014-LEAD-637-999_Forums_Week 7 Reflection Forum.pdf
11. Image of God_FA2012-LEAD-645-999_Forums POST #9_Do we need God to be ethical.pdf
12. M Schudrich Meeting with Board of FODZ.pdf
13. Przerosl Project M Schudrich.pdf

14. Re_ The termination of the Przerosl project.pdf
15. Minister Builds Bridges One Grave at a Time - Atlanta Jewish Times.pdf
16. The Bridge Builder January 26- 30-33.pdf
17. Forum Pamięci 2013 Chesed Szel Emet.pdf
18. EJC 2015 Conf_Brochure.pdf
19. TMF Certified Articles of Incorporation.pdf
20. TMF Vision Mission Statements v 2.0.pdf
21. Reece 2012 Matzevah Values Final_2.pdf
22. Agenda for TMF Board Meeting 8-10 March 2013.pdf
23. TMF Board Member Worldview Smry.pdf

Verification:

1. Certificate From Warsaw Jewish Community 01.jpg
2. Certificate From Warsaw Jewish Community 02.jpg
3. Certificate From Warsaw Jewish Community 03.jpg
4. Certificate from FODZ.pdf
5. FODZ Krawczyk.pdf
6. Recommendation Letter from Rabbi Schudrich.pdf
7. Email Exchange with Hank_Tenacity.pdf

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