

THE COST OF LIFE

There is a scene at the end of *Schindler's List* where Oskar Schindler (Liam Neeson) is given a ring from the 1,200 Jews he bought from extermination. The ring is inscribed in Hebrew with a phrase that translates, "Whoever saves one life, saves the world." As Schindler studies his gift, he starts to mumble, "I could've got more out... If I'd made more money, I threw away so much money, you have no idea. If I'd just..." His bookkeeper and friend interrupts to say, "There will be generations because of what you did," to which Schindler responds, "I didn't do enough... this car... why did I keep the car? Ten people, right there, ten more I could've got. This pin, Two people. This is gold. Two more people... at least one... one more person... I could've gotten one more person I didn't."

For Oskar Schindler, the financial cost of preserving human life was very high. It cost him his entire fortune, and yet at the end of it all, he wasn't lamenting the cost, but rather the fact that he hadn't given up more for the sake of a few extra people. We look at his example and applaud. He understood the unique value of individual human beings. He understood that the value of life far exceeds the value of gold pins and luxury automobiles. He understood that financial sacrifice was the only appropriate response to the "cost of life". Abortion proponents, however, have turned Schindler's equation on its head. They argue that, in many cases, the value of a new baby is less than the value of the money it will take to feed and clothe that baby. This is utilitarianism at its ugly extreme, and the reasoning is no more honest than any of the other arguments people use to justify abortion. Babies aren't any less expensive after they're born, but very few people dare cite "extreme financial burden" as a legitimate reason for terminating their lives after birth (one exception to this rule was Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger who said in *Woman and the New Race*, 1920, that "The most merciful thing that the large family does to one of its infant members is to kill it.").

Essentially, there are two ways to evaluate the "Cost of Life". There is an immediate cost and a long-term cost. Abortion is a means of eliminating the short-term cost. For a few hundred bucks you can free yourself from the financial burden of diapers and baby food, but you also free yourself from a relationship with your child, you free yourself from someday having the support and care of a grown son or daughter. You free yourself from grand-kids and great grand-kids, and you free society from the long-term production and influence of an utterly unique human being. The late Julian Simon, well-known University of Maryland business professor, distinguished senior fellow at the Cato Institute, and author of *The Economics of Population Growth*, spent a lifetime demonstrating that people are the most valuable natural resource in the economic realm. He commented in the July 7, 1993 edition of *Investor's Business Daily* ("Is a Population Bomb Ticking?") that, "the most important benefit that population growth confers on an economy is that people increase the stock of useful knowledge. In the long run, the contributions people make to knowledge are great enough to overcome all the costs of population growth." Simon goes on to say, "If we measure the scarcity of people the same way we measure the scarcity of economic goods – by the market price – then people are becoming more scarce, because the price of labor time has been rising almost everywhere in the world." People create, people produce, people drive industry. With fewer people comes fewer innovations and less man-power.

The value of a single human soul is a staggering thing. In the biblical economy, in fact, the value of one human soul exceeds that of the entire material universe combined. Souls are eternal. Gold and diamonds are not. The cost of raising a child is real and significant, but the cost of killing them is far greater.