Oskar Schindler

A Sheep in Wolf's Clothing

—Keith W. Carpenter

There is a poignant old question that juxtaposes artistic expression with daily reality: "Does art imitate life, or does life imitate art?" If art imitates life, then forms of art, and film in particular, are an insightful means for analyzing day-to-day social realities, an instrument for better understanding the world in which we live. But if life imitates art, as both Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw asserted (Adams 1971, 76, 77), then various art forms become a source of modeling and inspiring societal and individual behavior. In the latter case, societies will take an interest in what their art communicates, because their art will influence people's behavior. No doubt they will also discover the propaganda value of art. May I suggest that both sides of the argument are true at one and the same time? Art does imitate life and life imitates art. There is a continuing dance between the two.

The film *Schindler's List,* based on Australian Thomas Keneally's 1982 historical novel , *Schindler's Ark* (Dirks 2012, 1) exposed the horrors of Nazism, particularly in its systematic attempt to eliminate what it considered to be inferior human races—Jews, Gypsies, People of Color. At the same time, *Schindler's List,* which the American Film Institute selected in 2007 as the eighth best movie ever made (ibid.), reminded us that one leader can have a huge influence on unfolding historical events, whether that leader is Adolf Hitler or Oskar Schindler. The late-twentieth-century emphasis on organizations as systems may have lured us into believing that once the culture of an organization is established, it locks individuals into roles that define functions and determine outcomes. If leaders are to survive, they have to conform to what the system tells them to be. "When placed in the same system, people, however different, tend to produce the same results" (Senge 2006, 42). Indeed, Nazism as a system seemed to operate exactly that way. Its military officers were, with rare exception, uniformly

capricious in their cruelty toward Jews. But in another way, *Schindler's List* shattered that image of systems. It asserted the potential of a determined leader to radically alter outcomes, even when up against overwhelming odds and seemingly invincible power structures. Oskar Schindler, himself a member of the Nazi Party, almost singlehandedly managed to rescue 1,100 vulnerable Polish Jews from certain death as objects of Hitler's wrath in the Nazi party's "Final Solution." In the face of the Nazi terror machine, and under its leaders' noses, Schindler surreptitiously ran businesses devoted to saving the very Jewish lives his Nazi friends were trying to eliminate. In his risky endeavor, Oskar Schindler beat the system at its own game. As Ebert adroitly observed, "The message of the film is that one man did something, while in the face of the Holocaust others were paralyzed," (Ebert 1993, 3). In its own way, as I hope to show, Schindler's behavior was as outrageously compassionate as the Nazi machine's was cruel.

I assert that in pursuing his humanitarian goal of saving Jewish lives, Schindler demonstrated several of the leadership practices American businessman Robert K. Greenleaf advocated and elucidated three decades after World War II under the moniker "servant-leadership." Greenleaf, in his classic book, *Servant Leadership* (1977/2002), now regarded as the foundational document for the ideals of leadership rooted in a service orientation (Covey 2002, 1), identified seventeen discrete characteristics of servant-leaders and listed them as subheadings in the book's first chapter (Greenleaf 1977, 27–53). In identifiable ways, Oskar Schindler represented most of them. In this article I will demonstrate Schindler's practice of five of Greenleaf's servant-leader characteristics, as depicted in Steven Spielberg's brilliant directing of *Schindler's List.* The five are: servant first, not leader first; acceptance and empathy; awareness; healing; and building community and showing love. I also intend to bring attention to Spielberg's presentation of the many-faceted nature of Schindler's character. Schindler was not a simple man, or easy to understand. He was complex, to say the least. According to Spielberg's depiction, Schindler was a slow and reluctant convert to servant-leadership. He did not start out a servant-leader. His emotional conversion, prodded by observing numerous Nazi atrocities, ran well ahead of his words and servant behaviors. But in awkward and often clumsy ways, and through a deeply introspective journey, Schindler managed to emerge as the epitome of a servant-leader.

It's wildly ironic to think that Schindler would anticipate and practice so many of Greenleaf's principles. After all, Schindler was a member of the

Nazi Party, whose founding ethos thoroughly rejected the humanitarian concerns underlying servant-leadership. But Schindler, we learn in the movie, was a man of mixed motives and confusing paradoxes (Gonsalves 2007, 1). The magnitude of what he accomplished, and the fact that there are more living descendants of his "Schindlerjuden" in the world today than the total population of Jews residing in Poland (six thousand versus four thousand), demands that his leadership practices be recognized, and his story be told. The world is in need of more servant-leaders. If Wilde, Shaw, and others are correct that life really does imitate art, then the potential exists for new servant-leaders to arise, inspired by Schindler's example.

Oskar Schindler refused to acquiesce in the face of the Holocaust. He did not publicly protest or start a movement. He did not overtly challenge the ideology of the Nazi Party. In fact, he wore their pin and they considered him one of them. But Schindler did subvert the Nazi cause by using his personal resources to "rob" the Holocaust of 1,100 victims, whom he affectionately referred to as "my" Jews (Ebert 1993, 3).

Unfortunately, government-sponsored genocide did not end with the collapse of Nazi Germany. It remains a grotesque form of social injustice that has recurred with chilling frequency in every generation, going back to the earliest days of recorded history (Gray and Marek n.d., 1). Sometimes genocide takes on more antiseptic names, such as "ethnic cleansing." But its forms are all too familiar—mass murder aimed at eliminating a group of people, or inflicting severe bodily harm based on others' nationality, race, ethnicity, or religion (ibid., 3). In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries alone there have been more than ninety-one million deaths from genocide. The list of geographical locations includes Armenia, China, the USSR, Germany and German-occupied Europe, Cambodia, Rwanda, and the more recent genocides in Somalia and Darfur. If we reach back to the nineteenth century, the United States is included, in its policies toward American Indians.

Schindler's List reminded us of our common humanitarian duty to oppose genocide whenever and wherever it rears its ugly head. It showed us that genocide can only succeed if wise, resourceful, and conscience-driven people stand on the sidelines and watch, as was the case with the rise of Hitler's Third Reich in Germany. The regret-drenched words of Martin Niemoeller, speaking about what happened in Germany, haunt us in reflecting on that era. Niemoeller, a German pastor who preached against Nazism from his pulpit, ended up imprisoned at Dachau from 1941–45.

> First they came for the communists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a communist; then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist; Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew; Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak out for me. (*Holocaust Encyclopedia* 2012, 1)

SERVANT FIRST, NOT LEADER FIRST

The first of Greenleaf's characteristics of servant-leadership that we see manifested in Oskar Schindler is what Greenleaf called "servant first, not leader first."

> The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test...is this: do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? (Greeleaf 1977, 26)

Oskar Schindler did not start out a "servant first." He was an unsuccessful German businessman who saw a wartime opportunity to make a lot of money in occupied Poland. With Polish Jews no longer allowed to own businesses, Schindler wined, dined, and bribed his way into gaining permission from the German occupation forces to take control of an enamelware plant and make kitchenware and field kits for the German army. The most profitable way to staff his plant was by exploiting the slave labor of Krakow's Jews. Schindler, aware of his shortcomings as a manager, started by recruiting Itzhak Stern, a Jewish accountant familiar with the business. Not only did Oskar hold Stern's business acumen in high regard, but a genuine friendship developed between the two. Schindler attended to what he called the "presentation" of the business, the "panache," which was aimed mostly at impressing the Nazi officers who ran Krakow. Schindler's genius was seen "in bribing, scheming, conning" (Ebert 1993, 2).

However, conversion to a "servant-first" mentality took place in Schindler. Exactly when it happened is hard to say (Kempley 1993, 2). More than anything else, the movie is about Schindler's growth and transformation. Some of this conversion Howe called a gradual "moral education" (Howe 1993, 2), as Schindler found himself increasingly repulsed by the

escalating cruelty of the Nazi soldiers. The transformation was also spurred by large-scale atrocities Schindler witnessed.

Already feeling sympathetic toward the efficient Jewish workers who were lining his pockets, Oskar was out riding his horse in the early morning of 1942. From a hilltop overlooking the Podgorze Jewish ghetto, he watched in stupefied horror as the ghetto was systematically liquidated. Families were forcibly removed from their homes and stripped of their possessions. Those who resisted or tried to escape were summarily shot. Survivors were taken to the newly completed Plazsow Labor Camp, run by the savage Amon Goeth. As Schindler watched from afar, he appeared stunned by what his eyes beheld. It is our first clear glimpse of Schindler's internal turmoil. Obviously, he was not taking what he saw lightly.

Director Spielberg focused long and hard on the look of shocked horror on Schindler's face. A humanitarian conscience had been aroused within Oskar, and it began to shape his outlook from that moment forward (Gonsalves 2007, 1). In the midst of the mayhem, Oskar noticed a small girl in a bright red coat, no more than four or five years old, as she managed to slip away from a group of children being herded into waiting trucks. She entered a nearby building to hide. We know Spielberg wanted to call attention to her role in Schindler's transformation because until the epilogue, the little girl's red coat was the only piece of the movie filmed in color (Kempley 1993, 2). From that brutal ghetto scene forward, "Schindler sees the Jews as actual, suffering people, not cheap labor. And he launches a conscious, aggressive plan to save as many of them as possible, losing his fortune in the process" (Gonsalves 2007, 1).

Spielberg used the relationship that developed between Amon Goeth and Oskar to further highlight the emerging change taking place within Schindler. A meeting between the two followed in Goeth's villa overlooking the Plazsow camp. Schindler was clearly perturbed about the razing of the ghetto but managed to hold his anger in check. When Goeth complimented Oskar on his suit, Schindler retorted with biting sarcasm, "I'd offer to get you one but the man who made it is probably dead." Amon ignored Oskar's jab, and in the conversation that followed, the two men began to develop a friendship, which both wanted.

On Goeth's part the friendship was motivated by envy, greed, and the allure of Schindler's charm. Schindler represented success, wealth, and influence—all the things Goeth wished for. Amon deferred to Oskar's sympathies by expressing some ambivalence about the Nazi philosophy he

so zealously carried out. During the grisliest aspects of the ghetto liquidation the Nazi commandant had agonizingly declared to his staff, "I wish this f***ing night were over." As Gonsalves observed, "He's [Goeth] not a sadistic caricature. He sees himself as a guy doing a job, who would really rather not have to be here in frigid Plaszow executing Jews, if not for the troublesome fact that they exist" (Gonsalves 2007, 1).

For Oskar, the friendship was purely pragmatic, like all of Schindler's friendships with Nazi officers. "If they can help him, he helps them, one hand washes the other" (Gonsalves 2007, 1). Oskar needed his Jewish laborers, now housed in Goeth's camp. He explained to Goeth that his Jewish workers were trained and much less expensive than hiring Poles. Goeth went along but not without claiming a personal slice of the pie. The commandant told Schindler, "I have heard you are a man who understands the meaning of the word gratitude." "Gratitude" became the film's circumlocution for bribes and paybacks. Oskar never failed to show his gratitude to anyone who helped him.

Schindler and Goeth were depicted as holding a few things in common at this early point in their relationship. Both were unprincipled in pursuit of their goals. Both saw the war as an opportunity to advance personal interests. Spielberg depicted their similarities in a powerful scene, shortly after their first meeting, with each of them standing in front of a mirror shaving their Aryan faces. Shot in low light black and white frame, it was hard to discern whether we were looking at Goeth or Schindler as the camera switched back and forth between them. As time went on, the differences, especially in attitudes toward the Jews, grew more divergent. Goeth became increasingly desperate to serve the Nazi cause by eliminating Jews. Schindler became increasingly desperate to serve his growing humanitarian convictions by rescuing Jews.

The event that seems to have pushed Schindler into a servant-first mentality came when Goeth was ordered by his superiors to exhume the Jewish bodies from their mass graves and incinerate them. The scene was macabre. A conveyer belt was needed to heap the bodies onto the huge open fires. Ash from burning human flesh and bone rained down on Krakow like snow in winter. Schindler was not far away, freshly stunned by the magnitude of the unearthed carnage. On top of a body-carrying cart, Oskar spotted the little girl he had seen from the hilltop, still wearing her red coat. The look on his face was shocked dismay as he realized the Nazis had executed one so young and innocent. The savagery of the scene reinforced Schindler's determination to find ways to shelter at least some of the Polish Jews from the worst of Nazi brutality.

From this point forward in the movie, Schindler was a passionate servant-leader. His attempt to amass a wartime fortune did not completely disappear, but it clearly took a back seat to his cunning efforts to protect as many Jews as possible.

ACCEPTANCE AND EMPATHY

Another quality of Greenleaf's servant-leaders is that they practice acceptance and empathy. "The servant-leader accepts and empathizes, always accepts the person but sometimes refuses to accept some of the person's effort or performance as good enough" (Greenleaf 1977, 33–34).

Oskar Schindler was both accepting and empathetic toward the Jews he employed. As time went on he became more empathetic due to the destiny they faced at the hands of their Nazi tormentors. Oskar lived out his acceptance and empathy by doing everything within his power to protect them.

In a powerful scene, Jews in the labor camp who were identified by doctors as too weak to work were loaded like cattle onto trains bound for Auschwitz. It was an excruciatingly hot day and breathable air was in short supply inside the overcrowded train cars where prisoners were forced to stand. Schindler was concerned about the train's doomed human cargo and asked Goeth's permission to cool them down with water from nearby fire hoses, which could be sprayed through each car's two small windows. Goeth initially scoffed at Oskar's request but couldn't bring himself to say no to his friend. Schindler supervised the spraying while still wearing his three-piece suit. When the fire hoses were not long enough to reach the last few cars, Oskar asked if he could go to his plant and get extensions, which Goeth reluctantly permitted, while continuing to laugh at Schindler's surprising and "foolish" concern for Jews. "What you're doing is cruel, Oskar," Goeth shouted. "You're giving them hope." Hope is exactly what Schindler's empathy gave the Jews under his influence. For allowing this act of mercy, Oskar did not miss the opportunity to show his gratitude to Goeth and the Nazi officers with plenty of German beer to go around.

Schindler even showed empathy toward Amon Goeth, the movie's antagonist and personification of Nazi evils. That empathy, however, seemed to serve a greater agenda Oskar held of trying to soften Goeth's attitude toward the Jews under his control. Goeth often began his day by shooting Jews in the labor camp with a high-powered rifle from the balcony of

his villa. Amon's maid, Helen, told Oskar she was sure he would one day shoot her. "There are no rules with him," she protested, "you never know what he might decide is wrong and shoot you." Schindler seems not to have ever given up on the idea that he might be able to influence Goeth toward moderation. Naive as it may seem, Oskar held to the notion that there was some good buried deep within Goeth, and he tried repeatedly to tap into it. In a conversation with Stern about the dangerous path they were walking, Schindler urged Itzhak to have some empathy for Goeth because of all the pressure put on him by his superiors. "If not for the war, he [Goeth] would be a good man, just a normal crook," Schindler declared. "The war brings out the worst in everyone."

Everyone except Schindler, that is. "The war has turned the self-centered and greedy Schindler into a man who risks everything to help others" (McAlister 1994, 2). Schindler's speech to Stern commending empathy for Goeth was hard to believe on the surface. It seemed highly unlikely that Oskar would succeed in dislodging Goeth's subhuman view of Jews. Yet it demonstrated the absolute determination of Schindler to leave no stone unturned in trying to protect Jews. Perhaps Oskar was also trying empathetically to assuage some of Stern's understandable terror about Goeth.

AWARENESS

A third characteristic of Greenleaf's servant-leaders is that they stay alert to changing conditions. Greenleaf called it a "high degree of awareness."

> A qualification for leadership is that one can tolerate a sustained wide span of awareness so that one better "sees it as it is"....The opening of awareness stocks both the conscious and unconscious minds with a richness of resources for future need. But it does more than that: it is value building and value clarifying, and it armors one to meet the stress of life by helping build serenity in the face of stress and uncertainty....Able leaders are usually sharply awake and reasonably disturbed. They are not seekers after solace. They have their own serenity. Leaders must have more of an armor of confidence in facing the unknown. (Greenleaf 1977, 41)

Oskar Schindler made it a point to keep a finger on the pulse of what was happening at the Plaszow Labor Camp. He had been caught off guard by the sudden liquidation of the Podgorze ghetto. That was the last time he let himself fall a step behind the Nazis' intentions. His friendships with

Nazi officers were one of the means he employed to keep himself informed. As their friendship grew, Goeth confided in Oskar about new orders he was receiving from the high command. After Amon commandeered Itzak Stern away from Schindler to work as the Nazi officer's accountant, Oskar made it a point to stay in touch with Stern via a weekly meeting at the labor camp's main gate to see what Stern was learning about Nazi plans.

Schindler did not ever act without a purpose. He continually tested the boundaries of how much tolerance toward Jews he could get away with. He publicly gave a thank you kiss to a young Jewish woman who presented him with a birthday cake on behalf of the plant workers. The Nazi officers who witnessed the indiscretion registered mild surprise, but not shock (the Jewish woman was definitely shocked). Schindler's Nazi friends had grown accustomed to Oskar's outrageous generosity toward Jews. However, when the Gestapo got word of it Schindler was arrested. In jail, Oskar's connections with high-ranking Nazi officers like Amon Goeth and Amon's superiors paid off (actually, Oskar's Nazi friends paid off the Gestapo) and Schindler was quickly released with a warning. After all, the Nazi military officers couldn't let their cash cow languish in prison. The incident only served to further embolden Schindler. "Schindler loved outfoxing the Nazis for its own sake. He knew he could get away with anything" (Gonsalves 2007, 1).

When Schindler learned that the Plaszow Labor Camp was being shut down and all of its prisoners shipped to Auschwitz, he put his plan in motion to rescue as many Jews as he could by buying them from Goeth. Goeth resisted at first, accusing Schindler of thinking he was Moses, a reference conspicuous enough to suggest Spielberg saw Schindler as exactly that—a twentieth-century Moses, leading Jews out of Nazi slavery and into a more just and humane postwar experience. To make his case for the purchase of Jews more compelling, Oskar told Amon his new plant would produce munitions, since artillery shells were more crucial to the war effort than mess kits. It was a deft move, and it enabled Oskar to save more Jews.

The scene between Goeth and Schindler arguing over Oskar's request to buy Jews illuminated Spielberg's perspective on Schindler, and highlighted Spielberg's creative genius. The negotiation took place on the balcony of Goeth's villa, the same balcony from which we'd seen him randomly gun down Jews in the prison yard. Their conversation was filmed from inside the villa through two sets of side-by-side, vertically arranged pane-glass windows. As the two men paced back and forth they moved in and out of the separate panes, which served as frames. Never did both appear within

the frame. If one entered the other exited. They remained separated by the thick door structure that held the windowpanes in place. The implication was clear. Though friends and sometimes bickering business adversaries, the line of demarcation between them had become "a thick wall, a visual analogue for how very much Schindler has become distanced from Goeth and Nazi ideology" (McAlister 1994, 2).

Actor Liam Neeson, who convincingly upheld the part of Oskar Schindler throughout the movie, later commented on that scene, "It was a very brave and quite a genius thing to do. He [Spielberg] kind of threw away the scene, but by doing so he made it much more important" (quoted in Weinraub 1993, 7).

To apply Greenleaf's words about the way servant-leaders practice awareness, Schindler was no "seeker after solace" (Greenleaf 1977, 41). The conditions around Oskar changed by the day, and he maintained a spontaneous readiness to do what the situation required to preserve "his" Jews. "Big shouldered and shrewd, Schindler can take care of himself while moving among the vipers; we know he'll take care of his workers, too" (Gonsalves 2007, 2). Oskar's commitment to awareness, trying to stay a step ahead of Goeth and the other Nazi leaders in their sinister schemes, was about to pay large dividends in Schindler's newfound goal of preserving a specific group of Jews he came to deeply care about.

HEALING

A fourth unique ability Greenleaf noted in servant-leaders that we see in Oskar Schindler is their penchant for addressing of the personal angst of others around them in a *healing* way.

> This is an interesting word, *healing*, with its meaning, "to make whole".... Perhaps, as with the minister and the doctor, the servant-leader might also acknowledge that his or her own healing is the motivation. There is something subtle communicated to one who is being served and led if, implicit in the compact between servant-leader and led, is the understanding that the search for wholeness is something they share. (Greenleaf 1977, 50)

There was no doubt that Oskar Schindler was out to offer as much respite and healing as possible to the Jews he gathered to work in his enamelware company and later his munitions plant. When nearly eight hundred

men arrived by train at Bernnlitz, Czechoslovakia, Oskar's hometown and the location of his new munitions plant, he welcomed them with warm words, and a meal of hot soup and bread, unheard-of luxuries at Plaszow and another example of Schindler's outrageous kindness to Jews, carried out in the presence of surprised Nazi soldiers. But it sent both his Jews and the Nazi regime a message Oskar wanted them to get—the Jews under his care were to be treated with dignity.

After rescuing the remaining three hundred women and girls from Auschwitz, where they were mistakenly routed, Schindler addressed the German military unit assigned to his plant. He told them there were to be "no summary executions." If workers misbehaved the case against them would be "properly" judged. And he actually forbade soldiers from entering the factory floor, saying it was necessary for the greatest productivity of the plant. Simply removing their threatening presence from inside the factory, Oskar greatly reduced his workers' angst—a healing move in itself. The presence of the Nazi uniform understandably evoked fears of brutal and capricious anti-Semitism.

Most interesting, and gutsy, was Schindler's attempt to have a healing, transformative influence on Goeth. After a conversation with Helen, Goeth's maid, about the brutality and unpredictability of Goeth, Oskar deliberately engaged the Nazi commandant in a discussion about the meaning of power. Goeth stated that he demonstrated his power by killing Jews who disappointed him. Schindler retorted that true power was seen in restraint, the decision not to punish someone when you had the ability to do so. Oskar told a parable about a great emperor who demonstrated his power by pardoning a thief caught in the act. The story bore shades of Jesus's confrontation by the Pharisees over the woman caught in adultery. "Let the one of you who has never sinned throw the first stone," Jesus told them (John 8:7, NLT). There's power, Schindler insisted, in the words, "I pardon you." Goeth laughed at Schindler. But Oskar's words left an impression on the German commandant.

The next day, when Goeth caught his stable boy having thoughtlessly placed the German officer's expensive saddle on the stable floor, Amon's temper flared but he caught himself and simply ordered the boy back to work. When the same lad was unsuccessful at removing a dirt ring from Goeth's bathtub, the German officer again started to punish the boy but stopped himself and simply sent the teenager on his way. However, moments later when Goeth was practicing his "I pardon you" line in front of a mirror,

and discovered that the mirror was not clean, he snapped, grabbed his rifle, and killed the adolescent as he walked into the camp yard.

Schindler's effort to have a transformative influence on Goeth was at best only marginally successful, but that did not stop Oskar from trying. Goeth was a tough case, "as frighteningly capricious as a tornado: the concept of mercy bounces off him" (Gonsalves 2007, 2). Yet, as their relationship progressed, Amon appeared to listen more intently to Oskar's reasoning about the treatment of Jews. It was shortly after killing the teenaged boy that Goeth allowed Schindler to spray cool water on the sweltering occupants of the train cars. Oskar managed to have a healing effect of at least some measure on everyone around him—Jews and Nazis alike.

BUILDING COMMUNITY AND SHOWING LOVE

A final Greenleaf servant-leadership characteristic is the intentional building of community and showing of love:

> Love is an undefinable term, and its manifestations are both subtle and infinite. But it begins, I believe, with one absolute condition: unlimited liability! As soon as one's liability for another is qualified to any degree, love is diminished by that much....All that is needed to rebuild community...is for enough servant-leaders to show the way, not by mass movements, but by each servant-leader demonstrating his or her own unlimited liability for a quite specific community-related group. (Greenleaf 1977, 52–53)

It's hard to reach any conclusion other than that Oskar Schindler practiced love toward his Jews. When the Plaszow Labor Camp shut down and its prisoners were being shipped to Auschwitz, Schindler made the decision to use all the wartime fortune he had amassed to redeem 1,100 of them from the gas chamber—as many as he could afford. Oskar had at his disposal what he told Stern was "more money than one person can possibly spend in a lifetime." He would soon discover otherwise.

In a telling scene in the middle of the night, Oskar, about to leave for his trip back to Germany, had his suitcases full of money all around his bed. But he couldn't sleep. He was doing some serious soul searching. He paced the room, staring out the windows into the darkness. Occasionally he glanced at or lifted one of his money-filled suitcases. His agony over the decision facing him was palpable. During that night he made his decision and found his resolve. In the morning he went to Goeth with his offer to buy

Jews who were otherwise bound for death at Auschwitz. When the browbeaten Goeth acquiesced, Oskar worked with Stern on making the infamous "list," for which the movie is named.

Oskar's sole reason for starting the new munitions factory was to protect as many Jews as possible until the war's end. "It was obvious to all that to be on Schindler's list was the difference between life and death" (Howe 1993, 1). Oskar understood that financial profit from his new factory was not a possibility. He had adopted a covert business plan of, as he later explained to an incredulous Stern, "never producing a shell that can actually be fired." Director Spielberg noted in an on-screen text box that Schindler's munitions plant was "a model of non-production for its seven months of operation." The part of Schindler's fortune he didn't expend purchasing Jews, he used in sustaining them in the factory's camp. It was a colossal act of love. How else does one explain that kind of sacrificial commitment on his part?

We saw another poignant example of Schindler's sacrificial love displayed when the train carrying three hundred of the women and girls on his list was mistakenly sent to Auschwitz. Schindler hurriedly drove to the infamous death camp and boldly asked for their release. He took with him a fistful of diamonds to use in persuading the camp's presiding officer. The Nazi commandant counter offered with three hundred workers who would arrive from Hungary the next day and could be rerouted without ever disembarking the train. Oskar refused. He was committed to the Polish Jews who had previously worked for him and were on his list. Armed with determination, charm, confidence, and plenty of loot, Schindler prevailed and obtained their release. When Auschwitz guards tried to keep the young Polish girls from boarding the train, Oskar sprang to their defense, claiming that the children's small hands were required to polish the inside of shell casings, a boldfaced lie, of course, but he won the day and the girls were allowed to go. When the war ended Schindler was penniless. He had spent his entire wartime fortune rescuing his beloved Polish Jews.

Oskar did a lot to build community among his Jewish workers. Inside his factory he insisted that his workers begin honoring the Sabbath with a service at sundown on Fridays, a compassionate development that shocked the detachment of German guards. Oskar himself was a nonpracticing Catholic who showed little personal interest in religion, but he recognized the importance of the Jewish faith in nurturing his workers' will to survive. He knew the suppression of their right to publicly practice their faith was one more egregious act of social injustice foisted upon them by Nazi oppression.

When news finally came that Germany had surrendered and the war was over, Schindler addressed his entire community of Jews, telling them that at midnight they would be free to go, but also candidly warning them that most would search in vain for their separated loved ones. He challenged the German guards to go home "as men, not murderers," an offer they took him up on and left without inflicting harm on the Jews in their charge. Before fleeing the camp himself, Oskar ordered that his remaining liquor stores, about the only thing he had left, be divided equally among the workers.

Schindler lived each day with the risk of being arrested for treason if his real intentions were uncovered by his Nazi overseers. His fate at the hands of the conquering Allies might not be much better, especially if they judged him too hastily. As Oskar confessed before the factory in his farewell speech, to the Allies "I am a member of the Nazi Party, a munitions manufacturer, and a profiteer of slave labor."

Love was a two-way street. Schindler's Jews showed their affection for him by melting down gold from their teeth and fashioning it into a ring that bore the Talmudic inscription, "He who saves one life saves the world entire." They wrote a letter for Schindler to carry in the event of his arrest by Allied forces, explaining everything he had done on their behalf, and calling attention to the fact that his plant, by intent, never produced a workable artillery shell. All 1,100 Jewish workers signed it. The sense of community they shared was strong and their love was mutual. Oskar Schindler exemplified what Greenleaf later described as a key characteristic of servant-leaders: "He took unlimited liability for a quite specific community-related group," (Greenleaf 1977, 53).

CONCLUSION

In an unorthodox fashion, and in the face of the genocidal policies of the maniacal dictator Adolf Hitler, Oskar Schindler found a way to shelter 1,100 Jews from certain extinction. That is servant-leadership at its best. Schindler's embrace of servant-leadership had a transformative influence on his own persona. According to Greenleaf, servant-leadership always changes its practitioners. Steven Spielberg explained that one of his reasons for making the movie after reading Keneally's book was that "He [Schindler] went from a Great Gatsby to a great rescuer, and it fascinated me" (quoted in Weinraub 2012, 4). In Howe's words, "He (Schindler) started off with his

stated intention—the need for free and motivated labor. He ended up as a conscientious savior" (Howe 1993, 1).

Spielberg's movie-ending statistics pointing out that there are now more Schindler Jews in the world than all the Jews left in Poland, carried the message that "Schindler did more than a whole nation to spare its Jews" (Ebert 1993, 3). As Ebert contended, that message was ancillary to Spielberg's more important assertion that Schindler is to be revered not because of how many Jews he saved but because he did something. He was not paralyzed in the face of Nazism, as so many were (Ebert 1993, 3). In the crisis of the times, Oskar Schindler took upon himself the mantle of the servant-leader, and bore it well. May his tribe increase.

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