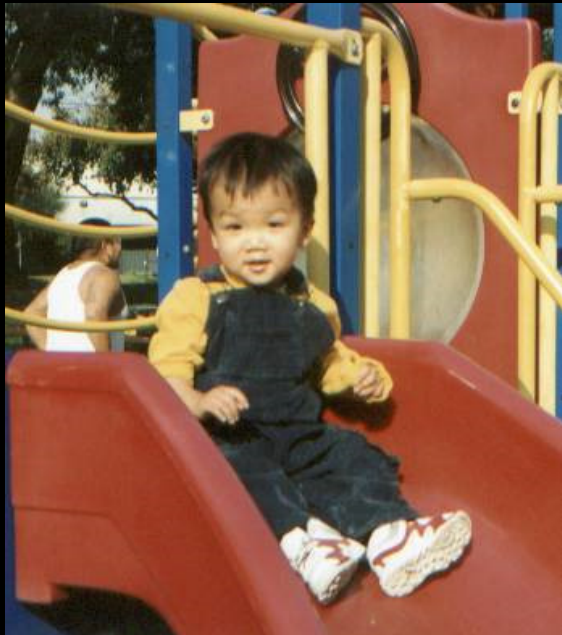# What Matters More to God?

The Individual or the Social Order?
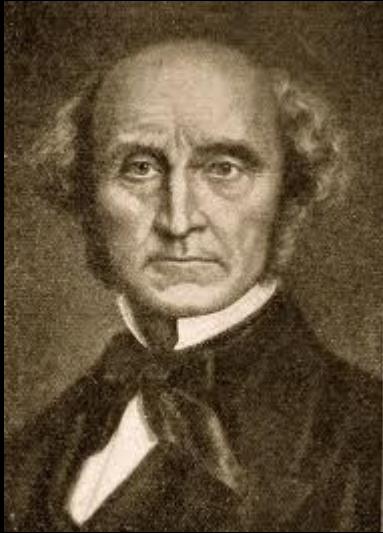
A story of my son

A story of my son

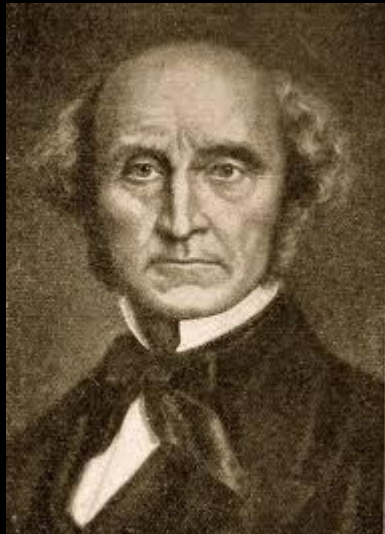# The Value of People:

- Intrinsic
- Instrumental

People: Instrumental Value?

People: Instrumental Value?

- John Stuart Mill (1806 – 1873), father of utilitarian ethics

People: Instrumental Value?

People: Instrumental Value?

- "The greatest good for the greatest number?"
- You cannot maximize two variables at once
  - J. von Neumann and O. Morgenstern (*Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*, Princeton University Press: Princeton, N.J., 1947, p. 11)
  - Implicit in the theory of partial differential equations, D'Alembert (1717 – 1783)
- What is 'good'?
- What is the 'greatest number'?

People: Intrinsic Value?

- What is the basis for people having intrinsic value?

People: Intrinsic Value?

- 'Medical historians have pointed out, for instance, that the care of defective newborns simply was not a medical concern in classical antiquity. The morality of the killing of sickly or deformed newborns appears not to have been questioned until the birth of the Christian church. No pagan writer – whether Greek, Roman, Indian or Chinese – appears to have raised the question whether human beings have inherent value ontologically, irrespective of social value, legal status, age, sex and so forth. The first espousal of an idea of inherent human value in Western civilization depended on a belief that every human being was formed in the image of God.' (Vinoth Ramachandra, *Subverting Global Myths*, p.99)

People: Intrinsic Value?

- Human beings bear the 'image of God', from Genesis 1:26 – 27
- Genesis 1 – 11 develops the meaning and application of this image-bearing
- Genesis 1 – 11 compares with other views of humanity, especially the literary peer group

Stasinos' Cypria (European)	Atrahasis (Babylonian/Akkadian)	Zoroastrian Avesta (Old Iranian)	Genesis 1 – 11 (Hebrew)
Problem: Overpopulation, wickedness, earth burdened	Creation (1.1-351): the work of the gods and the creation of humans	Creation: Ahura Mazda tells Yima (human) to be king over creation	Creation (1:1-2:3): God creates the world and humans and blesses them
First Threat: Zeus sends the Theban War; many destroyed	First Threat (1.352-415): Humans numerically increase; plague from the gods to limit overcrowding; Enki's help	First Threat: Overpopulation; Yima asks the earth goddess Armaiti to expand herself	First Threat (2:4-4:26): Genealogy of heavens and earth; the Fall; God promises victory to the seed of the woman; Cain kills Abel and settles in a city; God preserves Seth
Second Threat: Zeus plans to destroy all by thunderbolts; Momos dissuades Zeus	Second Threat (II.i.1-II.v.21) Humanity's numerical increase; drought from the gods; Enki's help	Second Threat: Overpopulation; Yima asks the earth goddess Armaiti to expand herself	Second Threat (5:1-9:29): Genealogy of Adam to Noah; human violence; God destroys the world through the flood; God preserves Noah and family

Stasinos' Cypria (European)	Atrahasis (Babylonian/Akkadian)	Zoroastrian Avesta (Old Iranian)	Genesis 1 – 11 (Hebrew)
Third Threat: Momos suggests that Thebis marry a mortal to create Achilles and that Zeus father Helen of Troy; war results between the Greeks and the barbarians	Third Threat (II.v.22-III.vi.4): Humanity's numerical increase, Atrahasis Flood, salvation in boat	Third Threat: Overpopulation; Yima asks the earth goddess Armaiti to expand herself	Third Threat (10:1-11:9): Genealogy of Shem, Ham, Japheth; Tower of Babel and dispersion
Resolution: Many destroyed by Trojan War, earth lightened of her burdened	Resolution (III.vi.5-viii.18): Numerical increase; compromise between Enlil and Enki; humans cursed with natural barrenness, high infant mortality rate, cult prostitution (to separate sex and procreation)	Resolution: Ahura Mazda sends a deadly winter with heavy snowfall to punish overcrowding; Yima told to build a three storied enclosure to survive; humanity destroyed outside while a boy and girl born in enclosure every 40 years	Resolution (11:10-26): Genealogy of Shem; introduction of Abram (In 11:27ff., God calls Abram out of Ur to begin Israel.)

Comparison of Stories: Genesis

- Similarities:
  - a fivefold structure
  - problems caused by humanity
  - a concern for population
  - divine judgment of some sort
- Differences:
  - "All other traditions view population control as the solution to urban overcrowding. Genesis offers dispersion, the nomadic way of life. Genesis 1 – 11 then constitutes a rejection of...civilization itself, if its continuance requires human existence to be treated as a contingent good. For Genesis the existence of a new human was always good."
  (Kikawada & Quinn, *Before Abraham Was*, p.38)

From Genesis to Jesus

- Christian ethics mirrors God's immense willingness to make personal sacrifices for the smallest person

People: Intrinsic Value?

- 'If individuals live only seventy years, then a state, or a nation, or a civilization, which may last for a thousand years, is more important than an individual. But if Christianity is true, then the individual is not only more important but incomparably more important, for he is everlasting and the life of a state or a civilization, compared with his, is only a moment.' (C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*)

Areas of Application

- Education and Educational Policy
- Health Care and Health Policy
- Business, Finance, and Corporate Policy
- General Civil Rights and Human Rights Law