“Well, I am delighted to be with you today and participate. I count it a real privilege to participate in this event at the Tyson Center. I very much appreciate the vision of John Tyson in setting this up and the good work of Judy and her team including Sarah and all of the rest of them as far as putting this conference together.

“Etched in stone on the floor of the chapel of Christchurch College in Oxford University are words written by John Locke over 300 years ago – “I know there is truth, opposite falsehood and that it may be found if people will search for it is worth the seeking.” Now, over the last three years we have seen a collapse in financial markets, domestic and global economic meltdown, foreclosures and unemployment at record levels. In fact, in today's paper the question was whether or not they could finish these foreclosure issues within 50 years in some of the states based upon how they are proceeding. And also largely from my perspective there has been an ineffective involvement of government in its attempt to correct the situation.

“While there have been some signs of improvement, there is still uncertainty and, yes, there is an appropriate use of that word ‘sustainability’ again because there is questions about sustainability of certain things in a market system and certainly there are major questions about predictability. What were the causes for this financial collapse? Everybody has been trying to discuss and find that out over the last three years. Was it the self interest of profit seekers compounded by forces of unrestrained greed? Did it reflect a lack of moral compass and a duty of care in the underwriting, packaging and selling of innovative securities? Or are we to conclude that these up and down cycles of a market-driven economy are just inevitable?

“President Obama soon after his election suggested and I quote “We have arrived at this point as a result of an era of profound irresponsibility that engulfed both private business firms and public institutions including some of our largest corporations and the seats of power in Washington DC.” So, have we lost a desire to seek and know truth, to act responsibly as we do business, to determine what is right for the common good. Will more legislation and regulation solve the problem?

“As we conduct business in this pluralistic society, can we agree on a source for moral authority? Can the business firm make money, create wealth, and also be a moral community for the development of human character and social concern? Can leadership make a difference? Does one's faith have a relevance in the way business is conducted? And are the concepts of continuity and sustainability still relevant in this volatile and rapidly changing world?

“As we try to answer these questions, I think we should first recognize the reality that it is people who make markets work, people who can be right or wrong, good or evil, honest or dishonest, prudent or selfish, people who are imperfect and weak, sinners yet made in God's image with dignity and worth in their own fingerprint of potential, people who have been created with the freedom of choice but who are also morally responsible for their decisions and actions.

“We should also recognize that in this dynamic and changing market world the ethical and moral decisions required of business leaders cannot be determined by a set of rules. Nor can a socially or commercially desired result always be achieved by the interjection of more
government, funds and control. While legislative actions bring a higher standard of accountability and can provide a stick for more penalties for violations, they cannot assure the honesty, the character, the integrity of the people involved in making these decisions.

“So, how can these virtues become more an integral part of the way we live, the way we do business, the way we lead, and the way we conduct ourselves in our various work environments? I suggested that we need a transformation in how business firms are led and how future business leaders are taught. Those of us in the market with a strong faith commitment should provide an example for others to follow.

“We need to bring our faith work on Monday and to learn to integrate the claims of our faith with the demands of our work. In so doing, we should be concerned not only about what people do and how they do it in their work but also about the person they are becoming in the process. This important concept relating to the responsibility and accountability of a leader became a reality for me as I was mentored by my predecessors in ServiceMaster and also through the writings and friendships and advice of Peter Drucker.

“Now, Drucker is often referred to as the father of modern day management and he reminds us that the management of people in an organization – we are not managing things, we are managing people – is truly a liberal art and requires the understanding of what makes up the human condition. “This”, he said, “includes the recognition that a humanity cannot be defined solely by its physical or its rational nature but it also has a spiritual dimension. It is this spiritual side of our humanity that influences our character, our ability to determine right and wrong, to recognize good or evil and to make moral judgments. It is the driver for developing a philosophy of life and a world view that can provide a moral and ethical standard that is not relative, that is other oriented and functions even when there are no prescribed rules.

“Thus there is a growing recognition and the fact that the Center is established here for faith and spirituality is another confirmation of that. In the learning and understanding of what it means to lead and manage people and in that process, this should not be divorced from questions of faith or even the role of God in one’s life. While some in the secular academy may find this conclusion difficult to accept. Others are ready to recognize its validity.

“In his book *The Fourth Great Awakening*, Robert Fogel, an economist from the University of Chicago, a Nobel Prize winner, traces the history of religious faith in America and its effect on our society and economy. In so doing, Fogel concluded that a major issue in our culture today was simply a lack of the distribution of what he referred to as – now, this is an economist speaking – spiritual assets. There was, he said, a void in our society in the development of the character of people and a provision for their spiritual needs. He also went on to say that in order for the business firm of the future to resolve the growing complexity of ethical issues, they will have to acquire more spiritual capital.

“Now, for us in ServiceMaster, we decided when the company was formed back in 1947 by our founder to be overt about this issue and we raised the question of God and the role of spirituality in our mission statement. Our company objectives were simply stated – to honor God in all we do, to help people develop, to pursue excellence and to grow profitably. Those first two objectives for us were end goals. The second two were means goals. We did not use that first objective as a basis for exclusion. It was in fact the reason for our promotion of diversity as we recognized that different people with different beliefs were all part of God’s world.

“As a business firm, we wanted to excel at generating profits and creating value for our shareholders. If we didn’t want to play by these rules, we didn’t belong in the ballgame but also we tried to encourage an environment where the workplace could be an open community, where the question of a person’s moral and spiritual development, the existence of God, how unrelated the claims of their faith with the demands of their work were issues of discussion, sometimes debate and, yes, even learning and understanding.
“We considered the people of our firm as in fact the soul of the firm. It did not mean that everything was done right. We experienced our share of mistakes. We sometimes failed and did things wrong but because of a stated standard and a reason for that standard, we typically could not hide mistakes. Mistakes were flushed out into the open for correction and in some cases for forgiveness and leaders could not protect themselves at the expense of those they were leading. The process of seeking understanding and application of these objectives at all levels of the organization was a never-ending task. It involved matters of the heart as well as the head and it was not susceptible to standard management techniques of implementation and measurement. While at times it was discouraging, it was also energizing as one realized that continued potential for creativity, innovation, growth as there was a focus on the development of the whole person and not just a pair of hands to get the work done.

“We found that regardless of the task, people can find a sense of purpose and meaning in their work. They can develop a strong ethic that extends to the care of others, a sense of community, a willingness to give back, to practice charity. Yes, they can develop a respect for the dignity and worth of their fellow workers and a willingness to serve as they have an opportunity to lead. As they do so, with all their differences, they were honoring their Creator even though some did not recognize Him as such. The community of work so developed first provided a fertile ground for raising the important questions about the purpose and meaning of life and work and the responsibility of the firm to support and enrich the environment in which it operates.

“Now, for me as a follower of Jesus Christ, one of the best ways I found to integrate my faith with my work and to lead in the development of the firm as a moral community was to seek to serve as I led, to reflect the principles that Jesus was teaching his disciples as he washed their feet including that no leader was greater or had a self interest more important than those being led. In seeking to so serve, the truth of what I said to be measured by what I did. My faith and the ethic of my life became a reality as I was able to serve those I led. It was the salt and life of what I believe and provided a platform for me to share my faith.

“Servant leadership did not come naturally. For me, it has been a continuing learning experience. The first thing I had to do was understand what it meant to walk in the shoes of those I would lead. This was a lesson that I would learn as I first joined the ServiceMaster senior management team and spent the first two months of my ServiceMaster career out cleaning floors, doing the maintenance work and the other work that was part of our service business. In so doing, I was beginning to understand what would be my dependence upon and responsibility to the people I would lead.

“Later in my career when I became CEO of the firm, the faces of our service workers would often flash across my mind as I was faced with those inevitable judgments between the rights and wrongs of running a business. The integrity of my actions had to pass their scrutiny. When all the numbers and figures were added up and recorded as results of the firm, they had to do more than just follow the rules and satisfy the changing standards of the accounting profession. They also had to accurately reflect the reality of our combined performance, a result that was real, a result that our customers could depend upon, a result that would reflect the true value of the firm. Otherwise, I was deceiving myself and those I was committed to serve.

“For me, the world of business has become what Peter Drucker said: This is your channel of distribution, Bill, for fulfilling and living your faith.” If I was in church today we would talk about this being a calling or a ministry. It’s reached from a janitor’s closet in Saudi Arabia to the Great Hall of People in Beijing, from sweeping streets in Osaka to ringing the bell on the New York Stock Exchange. The marketplace has provided a wonderful opportunity for me to embrace and engage those who do not believe the way I do but who I believe have been created in the image and likeness of God and who by my words and actions should see the reality of God’s love.
“Creating cultures of character requires leaders to know what they believe and why they believe it, to seek truth, to know the source of their moral authority, to know what is right even when there are no rules or codes of conduct. The global economy and market provide a wonderful opportunity for people of faith to live and share their faith. There is a common language of performance in the market that crosses secular, cultural and religious barriers. When there is performance, people listen and yes, some people listen and respond and seek to grow in the person they are becoming.

“As ServiceMaster grew to involve the management and employment of over 200,000 people, delivering services to over 10,000,000 customers in the US and 45 foreign countries, we had great diversity of faith and culture. Yet we can all agree on a common purpose to recognize the dignity and worth of every person and to have a firm commitment to other than self. If we are willing to search for it, truth can be found in the practice and implementation of such commitments. Thank you for your careful listening.

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Bill Pollard (C. William Pollard) is the former Chairman of the Board of The ServiceMaster Company and currently serves as an advisor to the company. He twice served as Chief Executive Officer, as well as many other executive positions. ServiceMaster provides services to both the commercial and consumer markets and operates under such well known brands as Terminix, TruGreen, American Residential Services, Merry Maids, and American Home Shield. During his leadership to ServiceMaster, the company was recognized as the #1 service company on the Fortune 500 and was also named as one of its most admired companies. The Financial Times has called ServiceMaster one of the most respected companies in the world.

Mr. Pollard was known for balancing the company’s success with a Christian approach to management. Mr. Pollard is actively involved in leading the charge on integrating one’s faith at work through the many books and magazine articles he has written, as well as numerous speaking engagements. He has won numerous awards for leadership and business ethics including the Hesburgh Award for Business Ethics from Notre Dame University.

Mr. Pollard has served as a director of Herman Miller, Inc., Provident Companies, and UnumProvident Corporation. He is a director of his alma mater, Wheaton College in Illinois, the Illinois Children’s Healthcare Foundation, the Drucker Foundation, and is Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

He is the author of the best-selling book "The Soul of the Firm" and has contributed to many other books and magazines including "The Leader of the Future", "Leading People", "Leading for Innovation and Organizing for Results", "The Leader Who Serves", and "The Heart of a Business Ethic" among many others. He recently released the book "Serving Two Masters: Reflections on God and Profit".

MORE INFORMATION: A PDF of Mr. Pollard’s complete keynote presentation is available at http://www.wisdomatwork.info/ or you may download an audio or video file courtesy of the Tyson Center for Faith and Spirituality in the Workplace.

Podcast: http://capture.uark.edu:8080/ess/echo/presentation/29183ed3-de61-4f05-a64e-9151b377b5/media.mp3