

December 18th, 1981

Speech at ServiceMaster Christmas Luncheon

C. William Pollard

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CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON
SERVICEMASTER INDUSTRIES INC. EMPLOYEES
THE CARLISLE
DECEMBER 18, 1981

1. HAVE YOU EVER EATEN FIGGY PUDDING? DO YOU KNOW WHAT FIGGY PUDDING IS? MANY PEOPLE DO NOT KNOW. I HAVE ONLY HEARD ABOUT IT ONCE.

YOU DO REMEMBER THE VERY POPULAR ENGLISH CHRISTMAS CAROL THAT GOES LIKE THIS:

"WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS,
WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS,
WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS,
AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR."

YOU DID NOT THINK I COULD SING. NOW YOU HAVE HEARD ME SING.

THAT'S THE FIRST VERSE. THE SECOND VERSE GOES LIKE THIS:

"NOW BRING US SOME FIGGY PUDDING,
OH, BRING US SOME FIGGY PUDDING,
BRING US SOME FIGGY PUDDING,
AND BRING SOME OUT HERE."

THE THIRD VERSE IS EVEN WORSE:

"WE WON'T GO UNTIL WE GET SOME,
WE WON'T GO UNTIL WE GET SOME,
WE WON'T GO UNTIL WE GET SOME,
SO BRING SOME RIGHT NOW!"

WHAT IS "FIGGY PUDDING"? WE HAVE NEVER HAD IT,
BUT THE CAROLERS REALLY WANTED IT.

MOST PEOPLE WANT SOMETHING FOR CHRISTMAS, BUT MANY REALLY DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY WANT. THEY WANT IT BROUGHT TO THEM, AND THEY WANT IT RIGHT AWAY. HERE IN AMERICA WE HAVE SO MUCH COMPARED WITH PEOPLE IN OTHER COUNTRIES AND ESPECIALLY IN THE UNDEVELOPED COUNTRIES WHERE THEY HAVE SO LITTLE. FOR CHRISTMAS SOME PEOPLE WOULD LIKE A BED OF THEIR OWN OR A HOME OR CLOTHES, AND MANY WOULD LIKE JUST A GOOD MEAL. THESE THINGS PLUS MANY MORE WE TAKE FOR GRANTED AND MERELY ACCEPT THEM. PEOPLE HAVE A LOT OF ILLUSIONS ABOUT WHAT THEY WANT.

2. CHRISTMAS IS THE END OF ILLUSIONS. CHRISTMAS IS THE GREATEST REALITY OF ALL. THE OPPOSITE OF ILLUSIONS IS REALITY. YOU HAVE HEARD THE CHRISTMAS STORY READ MANY TIMES FROM ST. LUKE'S GOSPEL, THE SECOND CHAPTER, THE FIRST TWELVE VERSES. IT IS FAMILIAR TO ALL OF US.

PETER CITES THE CYNIC WHO SAYS ALL THINGS CONTINUE AS THEY HAVE ALWAYS BEEN. NOTHING REALLY CHANGES, BUT TIME AND HISTORY JUST GO ON AND ON WITH NOTHING CHANGING. BUT AT CHRISTMAS, THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST CHANGED THINGS. GOD HIMSELF CAME INTO HISTORY.

(A) CHRISTMAS ENDS A HISTORIC ILLUSION. IN LUKE 2:1-5 IT TELLS EXACTLY WHERE AND WHEN IT HAPPENED. THE EXACT TIME AND THE EXACT PLACE. LUKE NAILS DOWN THE HISTORIC FACTS.

LUKE 2:1-5: "IN THOSE DAYS CAESAR AUGUSTUS ISSUED A DECREE THAT A CENSUS SHOULD BE TAKEN OF THE ENTIRE ROMAN WORLD. THIS WAS THE FIRST CENSUS THAT TOOK PLACE WHILE QUIRINIUS WAS GOVERNOR OF SYRIA. AND EVERYONE WENT TO HIS OWN TOWN TO REGISTER. SO JOSEPH ALSO WENT UP FROM THE TOWN OF NAZARETH IN GALILEE TO JUDEA, TO BETHELEM THE TOWN OF DAVID, BECAUSE HE BELONGED TO THE HOUSE AND LINE OF DAVID. HE WENT THERE TO REGISTER WITH MARY, WHO WAS PLEDGED TO BE MARRIED TO HIM AND WAS EXPECTING A CHILD."

GOD HIMSELF CAME INTO HISTORY AT CHRISTMAS WHEN JESUS CHRIST, GOD THE SON, CAME IN A HUMAN BODY. HE WAS BORN; HE LIVED; HE DIED. THIS WAS THE PURPOSE FOR HIS COMING INTO HUMAN HISTORY; TO DIE FOR THE SINS OF PEOPLE--YOU AND ME. SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL HAPPENED AT CHRISTMAS. CHRISTMAS ENDS A HISTORIC ILLUSION. CHRISTMAS IS THE GREATEST REALITY OF ALL HISTORY.

(B) CHRISTMAS ENDS THE SOCIAL ILLUSION. JESUS CHRIST, THE GOD AND CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSITY, HUMBLLED HIMSELF. VERSES 6 AND 7 READ, "WHILE THEY WERE THERE, THE TIME CAME FOR THE BABY TO BE BORN, AND SHE GAVE BIRTH TO HER FIRSTBORN, A SON. SHE WRAPPED HIM IN STRIPS OF CLOTH AND PLACED HIM IN A MANGER, BECAUSE THERE WAS NO ROOM FOR THEM IN THE INN."

IN THE LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM, IN A CATTLE STABLE--DAMP, DIRTY AND STINKY AS ALL ANIMAL STABLES ARE--GOD WAS BORN, A HUMAN BEING.

TODAY EVERYBODY WANTS STATUS. PEOPLE ARE IMPRESSED WITH BIGNESS, GREATNESS, INFLUENCE. THEY WANT THE BEST TO ENJOY AND HAVE THEIR FRIENDS AND OTHERS KNOW WHAT THEY HAVE. BUT GOD WAS BORN HERE ON EARTH IN THE MOST LOWLY, THE MOST UNLIKELY PLACE. GOD IS GLORIFIED IN A VERY SMALL THING, A BABY. JESUS CHRIST CAME TO EARTH TO SERVE, NOT TO BE SERVED. HE HUMBLLED HIMSELF.

IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT AT THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY TODAY, THE LARGER ENTRANCE IS SEALED AND ONLY A SMALL DOOR IS THERE. A PERSON MAY ENTER ONLY BY STOOPING TO GO THROUGH THE SMALL

DOOR. A PERSON MUST STOOP DOWN AGAIN TO GO INTO THE CAVE WHERE JESUS WAS BORN. CHRISTMAS ENDS THE SOCIAL ILLUSION.
(INSERT)

- (c) CHRISTMAS ENDS THE RELIGIOUS OR SPIRITUAL ILLUSION.
CHRISTIANITY IS THE ONLY TRUE RELIGION. ALL OTHER RELIGIONS ARE AN ILLUSION. ALL OTHER RELIGIONS ARE BASED UPON SELF-SALVATION. A PERSON MUST DO WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR SELF-SALVATION. ALL OTHER RELIGIONS LEAD TO DISILLUSIONMENT. AT CHRISTMAS, THE ANGEL PROCLAIMED IN LUKE 2:10-11, "BUT THE ANGEL SAID TO THEM, "DO NOT BE AFRAID. I BRING YOU GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY THAT WILL BE FOR ALL THE PEOPLE. TODAY IN THE TOWN OF DAVID A SAVIOR HAS BEEN BORN TO YOU: HE IS CHRIST THE LORD."
UNTO YOU IS BORN THIS DAY A SAVIOR CHRIST THE LORD. GOD CAME TO MAN. CHRISTIANITY IS THE ONLY RELIGION WHERE GOD COMES TO MAN. ALL OTHER RELIGIONS--MAN SEEKS HIS GOD. CHRISTMAS ENDS THE RELIGIOUS OR SPIRITUAL ILLUSION. JESUS CHRIST SAID, "I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIFE; NO MAN COMES UNTO THE FATHER BUT BY ME."

INSERT

ANOTHER VERY INTERESTING OBSERVATION WE MAY MAKE TODAY IS REGARDING HEROD'S TOMB. IT IS REFERRED TO AS THE HERODIAN, LOCATED JUST OUTSIDE OF BETHELEHEM. (HEROD WAS CROWNED RULER BY CAESAR ABOUT 37 B.C. HE RULED UNTIL AFTER THE BIRTH OF CHRIST. HE WAS THE ONE WHO MURDERED THE SMALL BABIES WHEN CHRIST WAS BORN, HOPING TO KILL THE CHRIST CHILD. HE WAS THE MOST POWERFUL RULER OF THOSE THAT RULED THE JEWISH PEOPLE.) OUTSIDE OF BETHLEHEM ARE ROLLING HILLS. HEROD TOOK THE LARGEST OF THESE AND ACTUALLY BUILT IT UP TO BE A SMALL MOUNTAIN. HE THEN BUILT A CASTLE ON IT, AND HOLLOWED OUT THE MOUNTAIN UNDER IT WHERE HE WAS LATER BURIED. IN TIME THE CASTLE WAS DESTROYED. TODAY ALMOST A MILLION VISITORS EVERY YEAR PASS THE HERODIAN AND DON'T EVEN STOP TO SEE THE BURIAL PLACE OF HEROD, THE MOST POWERFUL OF THE JEWISH RULERS. THEY JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM TO SEE THE PLACE WHERE JESUS CHRIST WAS BORN. CHRISTMAS ENDS THE SOCIAL ILLUSION.

IN JOHN 1:12 WE READ, "BUT AS MANY AS RECEIVE HIM
(JESUS CHRIST) TO THEM GAVE HE POWER TO BECOME THE
CHILDREN OF GOD, EVEN TO THEM THAT CALL ON HIS NAME."
THIS IS THE REASON GOD, THE SON, JESUS CHRIST CAME TO
EARTH TO BRING US SALVATION. ALL THE ILLUSIONS ARE
GONE WHEN WE ACCEPT GOD'S GIFT TO US AT CHRISTMAS.

HAVE A GOOD CHRISTMAS WITH YOUR FAMILY AND LOVED ONES.
THANK YOU FOR BEING A MEMBER OF THE SERVICEMASTER
FAMILY AND FOR ALL YOU DO TO MAKE SERVICEMASTER WHAT
IT IS. A MERRY AND MEANINGFUL CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL.

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