

2019

## Re-Personalising Work and Business: Bill Pollard and ServiceMaster's Narrative of Continuity through Change

Gordon Preece

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.spu.edu/pollard\\_fellowship](https://digitalcommons.spu.edu/pollard_fellowship)



Part of the [Business Commons](#), and the [Christianity Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Preece, Gordon, "Re-Personalising Work and Business: Bill Pollard and ServiceMaster's Narrative of Continuity through Change" (2019). *Pollard Research Fellowship Papers*. 3.  
[https://digitalcommons.spu.edu/pollard\\_fellowship/3](https://digitalcommons.spu.edu/pollard_fellowship/3)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Business, Government, and Economics, School of (SBGE) at Digital Commons @ SPU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Pollard Research Fellowship Papers by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ SPU.

# Re-Personalising Work and Business: Bill Pollard and ServiceMaster's Narrative of Continuity through Change

Gordon Preece

---



image: [www.servicemaster.com](http://www.servicemaster.com)

# Re-Personalising Work and Business:

## Bill Pollard and ServiceMaster's Narrative of Continuity through Change

Gordon Preece

### ABSTRACT

*This paper addresses the Re-Personalising of Work and Business by Bill Pollard, the long-serving CEO and Chair of the U.S. and global service industry giant ServiceMaster. It uses two frameworks to shed greater light on this story. The first framework is Michael Goldberg's Narratival Ethics Audit, which explores the role of character/virtue reinforced through connections to story via rituals and traditions. The second framework is the Cambridge UK-based Relationship Foundation's measure of relational proximity in terms of equality, continuity, multiplexity etc. The mega-theme running through these frameworks, as largely maintained and carried by Pollard and ServiceMaster, is that of the person-alising of work in Pollard's Christian personalist philosophy and practice.*

### INTRODUCTION

This paper<sup>1</sup> addresses the Re-Personalising of Work and Business by Bill Pollard, the long-serving CEO and Chair of the U.S. and global service industry giant ServiceMaster (SM). It sees Pollard's Christian Personalism as reflecting that mid-20<sup>th</sup> century movement mediated to him by his 'mentors' C.S. Lewis, Peter Drucker and SM's Wheaton College-shaped founders. In this sense it is a study of Pollard as the vehicle and carrier of SM's story and its personalist tradition, highlighting the human dignity and glorious destination of both its staff and clients. The paper will use two often-overlapping frameworks to shed greater light on this personal, relational and (financially and spiritually) profitable story.

First, in applying Michael Goldberg's Narratival Ethics Audit,<sup>2</sup> this paper will ask: Who are the key characters, founders or saints of ServiceMaster? What social conditions were critical around the company's founding? What characteristics, themes and traditions were key to its history and character? How were they institutionalised and ritualised in social practices beyond the founders' charisma to produce a sense of continuity in the calling and mission of Bill Pollard and SM? What key changes took place in SM's history and what kinds of social conditions were involved? What purpose besides making money did it exist for then?

Second, how are the Cambridge UK-based Relationship Foundation's criteria of relational proximity displayed in SM – for example, parity/equality,

multiplexity of role, directness of communication and particularly commonality of values and purpose – maintained through continuity of relationship? A representative and pertinent sample of these will be applied to SM. There is a fittingness of the criteria and the subject, as both SM and the Relationships Foundation display continuity of relational ethos through several decades.<sup>3</sup> The foundational nature<sup>4</sup> and fruitfulness of the Relationships Foundation's framework of relational proximity or nearness is demonstrable. Its survey-based measurements of relational proximity<sup>5</sup> are a flexible and quantifiable way of making relational effects visible at the personal and public, micro and macro levels.<sup>6</sup>

Using these two frameworks, this paper asks: How does a biblical philosophy of personalism<sup>7</sup> pervade Pollard's and SM's profession and practice? Where might it be incomplete, or need complementing, in our fragmenting age with its challenges to social ecology? To what extent did the more turbulent or even 'turbo-charged' technologically transformative Capitalism of the last 20 to 30 years overtake Pollard's and SM's more personalist, relational vision?

### BIOGRAPHICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUND

C. William or 'Bill' Pollard was born to devoted Christian parents. But after his father's sudden death when Bill was 18, he had an insecure, meandering period, perhaps missing fatherly mentoring,<sup>8</sup> before marrying. After college graduation he married his high-school sweetheart Judy. Vocationally, Pollard spent ten years as a tax lawyer, later of great benefit to SM shareholders, including employees, when it became a public partnership, a rare US phenomenon.<sup>9</sup>

For more than a quarter of a century, twice as CEO and as Chairman, Pollard was a leader of the world's leading service company. SM is a health, education and home services company, 'a network of more than 5,500 company-owned locations and franchised licenses'. Numerous brands were acquired by Pollard under its umbrella: TruGreen (Lawn Care, 1990), Terminix (pest control, 1986), American Home Shield (home warranty, 1989), ServiceMaster Clean, MerriMaids, Furniture Medic and AmeriSpec (home inspection, 1996), American Residential Services (heating, airconditioning, electrical), LandCare and Landscape (1999) and disaster response and reconstruction.<sup>10</sup>

Pollard was also a director of several public companies and numerous charitable, religious and educational organisations, especially Wheaton College

and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, whose philosophies influenced Pollard and SM.

## PERSONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL INFLUENCES AND PERSONALIST PHILOSOPHY

In his Narrative Ethics Audit, Goldberg first asks: 'Which individuals most impacted your organisation's story? Who are its saints, heroes or role models?'<sup>11</sup>

Bill Pollard had five years teaching and as a Vice-President at Wheaton College. Wheaton embodied nearly 160 years of Evangelical tradition and leadership continuity, with only eight Presidents, each averaging almost twenty years. Pollard was connected to four, serving on boards with three.<sup>12</sup> His own biography and calling overlap in many ways with Wheaton's institutional narrative.<sup>13</sup>

The early unwritten rule at SM, especially at management level, was a convention of family business-like continuity and only hiring from Wheaton. The Wheaton backgrounds of SM founder Marion E. Wade and his three successors – pastor and later MBA Ken Hansen, 40-year veteran Ken Wessner and Pollard himself – illustrate this. Each was brought into leadership alongside their predecessor who often became chairman.<sup>14</sup> Pollard saw this as a pattern of 'overlapping strengths and weaknesses just like shingles on a roof'.<sup>15</sup> Through this the Wheaton servant-leadership tradition was leak-proofed.

After the sudden and early death of his father, Pollard's very positive relationship with 'the two Kens' seems significant at key points. Examples he cited of its significance include trusting their promise of future benefits rather than taking a more lucrative law partnership,<sup>16</sup> his dramatic initiation into SM's tradition of service working and washing the floors, and when the assertive Wessner walked out early in a final Pollard interview because Pollard asked about future promotion. Pollard swallowed his pride. He seemed open to strong, fatherly mentoring. And through this the Wheaton and SM tradition of service became second nature to him.

It was also a C.S. Lewis-influenced personalist tradition (similar to marketplace theologian Robert Banks in his Fuller Seminary, Macquarie Christian Studies Institute and Australian retirement days with second wife Linda, also a Lewis devotee). The influential Marion E. Wade Center at Wheaton, which holds a collection of the works of seven British Christian authors including C.S. Lewis, was developed from an endowment to honour Wade and his Lewis and Inklings enthusiasm. Hansen and Wessner were similarly influenced by Lewis. And Pollard's favourite theological quotation from Lewis' 'The Weight of Glory' sermon climaxes his book, *The Soul of the Firm*, and many talks, exemplifying his Lewis-influenced Christian personalism:

*There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations – these are mortal, and their life is to ours as to the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit.*<sup>17</sup>

Further, the title of Pollard's concluding Chapter 13 challenges leaders to bring the best out of humble servants – 'Build on the Ordinary and Expect the

Extraordinary'.<sup>18</sup> It bookends beautifully with the Introduction's subtitle, 'It All Starts with the Person', specifically, 'People provide the life, the vitality, the conscience, and, yes, even the soul of the firm'.<sup>19</sup>

## SIGNIFICANT SOCIETAL EVENTS DURING FOUNDING – THE SHIFT TO SERVICE

In his Narrative Ethics Audit, Goldberg asks: 'At the time your organization (i.e. your firm, company, etc.) was founded, what significant events or changes were taking place in your profession/industry? What ... have taken place ... since then? What effects have they had on the way you do business and on your organization's ethics?'<sup>20</sup>

The slow shift from a manufacturing economy to a service economy was a propitious trend for SM. Theodore Malloch and Darren Grem noted in 2015 that 'The American economy is a service economy, making up approximately 75% of GDP'.<sup>21</sup> Yet SM did not merely piggy-back on this trend but had long been a positive example of a service-centred entity. It fortunately fitted the economic times and transitions from a manufacturing to a service economy like a glove. It was when many women, having tasted work while servicemen were away in World War II and after the 1950s Baby Boom, were returning to paid work.<sup>22</sup> This was often in extensions of their home-caring and service roles. But SM's rise was far from easy or merely economically determined. Personal and spiritual service ethic was key.

Malloch and Grem provide a 'Spiritual History' or 'biography' of SM and its service ethos, traced through its key leaders. Founder Marion E. Wade, a former baseballer and passionate Wheaton-educated Evangelical, founded the predecessor of SM as a moth-proofing service business in 'pre-Depression Chicago, an inauspicious time to start'.<sup>23</sup> Yet its activity and profit increased, despite difficult times.

Wade, who had temporary blindness from an industrial chemical accident, followed by an unexpected recovery, devoted himself in response to serving God fully in a fully Christian business. He became part of the developing Evangelical business community influenced by Christian Businessmen's Connection International (CBCI) and Herbert Taylor's 'Four-Way Test'<sup>24</sup> which Wade adapted for SM.

Wade advertised for fellow Wheaton graduates in its magazine, leading to, as Grem reports, 'several long-term hires .... [that] added to its tight corporate culture ... Wade's approach was both a complement to and a departure from mid-century managerial theory and practice'. It relied on individual executive's insight and conscience and direct biblical inspiration for business practices.<sup>25</sup>

However, the full social dimension of a Christian service ethic was not always understood or expressed. Many in the 1940s, especially southern Evangelicals, were uncomfortable with Franklin Roosevelt's anti-discriminatory Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC). But State legislation and enforcement was patchy and this favoured them.

Similarly, Grem writes that, 'In Chicago in the 1950s and early 1960s, the lack of a robust fair employment law and the support of institutions like Wheaton provided Wade an almost free rein to make ServiceMaster an evangelical business'. His 'service to the Master' ethic

was both individualistic and corporate and extended to the expanding franchisee network of SM, which allowed considerable entrepreneurial freedom. 'ServiceMaster's managerial class also grew primarily from word-of-mouth.' About 60% of new managers in hospital housekeeping and laundry were referrals.<sup>26</sup>

Though SM was largely Evangelical, Wade partnered with Robert Wenger, an experienced rug salesman and Roman Catholic committed to working his faith out at work. In 1947 they incorporated as Wade, Wenger and Associates (WWA). In 1952 WWA added carpet cleaning and 'custodial services' to its services. Wade proposed 'Honor God in all that we do' as WWA's credo.<sup>27</sup>

Service was seen as a spiritual exercise modelled on Jesus' foot-washing ministry (John 13). Preparation for such Christ-like service was through employee-led Bible study and prayer groups and theological conversation. In 1953 a future pattern emerged with another Wheaton Evangelical, Ken Hansen, taking the CEO role from Wade, and Wade becoming Chair. They trademarked ServiceMaster Industries, Inc. in 1958. Wade's autobiography<sup>28</sup> depicted the company as 'Masters of service, serving the Master'. SM's Downers Grove headquarters, close to like-minded InterVarsity, symbolised its service ethic in a massive marble sculpture of Jesus' foot-washing of his disciples.

Pollard perhaps represents a more middle-way approach between the then standard Evangelical views of business as a means to evangelism and liberal Protestant-based business ethics, management theory and networks based in Kiwanis, Rotary and Lions Clubs.<sup>29</sup> It represented a more universal ethics, rather than being evangelically exclusive. Society and workplaces were becoming more pluralistic and Pollard grew in his ability to negotiate that wisely, while not compromising core beliefs.

## THEMES AND TENSIONS – HONOURING GOD. GROWING PEOPLE AND PROFITS

In his Narrative Ethics Audit, Goldberg asks: 'What themes or patterns can you discern in your organization's history, i.e. in its story?'<sup>30</sup> These are, in Relational Foundation terms, what gave SM its strong sense of commonality of values and purpose.

Wade died in 1973, but the baton of the profitable, excellent, God-honouring, people-growing service that SM professed was passed on via the two Kens. They had been with Wade since 1954 when they developed the fourfold (not to be confused with Taylor's earlier Four Ways) commitment:

- 'To honor God in all we do
- To help people develop
- To pursue excellence
- To grow profitably'.<sup>31</sup>

The latent tension between the goals of honouring God and increasing profit was eased somewhat through a distinction between the first as an end goal and the second as a means goal. Later, while Wessner and Pollard still prioritised spiritual integration amidst rapid growth, tensions showed at times between the profit means goal and the other end goal (to honouring God) of developing persons.

Of SM's four key values, 'Honoring God' and

'Developing People' reflect the two Great Commandments as end values, integrated by human persons imaging God. The latter goals to 'Pursue Excellence' and 'Grow Profitably' were means goals, not ends. Wessner believed in a form of biblical personalism, 'that God created all things and that we honor Him when we honor His creation. We do that when we create an environment in our business dealings that will help people – whether ... employees or the people we serve – to become all that God has intended... It is a spiritual motivation'.<sup>32</sup>

Massive growth in a growing market in some ways eased the tension in a win-win way, but in other ways exacerbated it, if the two really collided.<sup>33</sup> A quarter of a century of expansion by acquisition proceeded through the leadership of Ken Hansen (1975-83) and successors Bill Pollard (1983-1993, 1999-2001), Carlos Cantu (1994-1999) and Jonathan Ward (2001-2007). Then the expansion into schools was spearheaded by the entrepreneurialism of the Pennsylvania franchise. It faced initial caution within SM, which was overcome by the franchise bearing the financial risk. There was related confrontation and bad publicity in 1993-1997 for presumably privatising a traditional public sector union in some school districts and for some worker contractual dissatisfaction.<sup>34</sup> Pollard, following his mentor Wessner, was socially concerned, but they were also consistently free market, celebrating individual freedom and initiative and not what they saw as corporate coercion.<sup>35</sup>

While Pollard and SM's labour record is generally positive, Pollard skips over these issues despite often otherwise admitting mistakes and asking forgiveness.<sup>36</sup> Here he may not have thought that he or SM had made mistakes, or thought they were sorted out.

Yet Malloch and Grem note that the devil is in the detail as 'Such spiritual values have different articulations from the top to the bottom – managerial strategy, franchise arrangements presumably reflecting SM's overall organizational culture'. They ask, critically, 'how well [SM] inserted these values into their own corner of the service market, and, ideally, into the broader service economy'.<sup>37</sup> From when SM began franchising in 1952, through to its Clean's 3,000 franchises, this was the main way it grew and passed on its corporate cultural values nationally and globally.

SM's new franchises were opening at a 2:1 US-to-international rate as a 'slow-growth franchising operation', especially since the 2007 global financial crisis. This may well have produced pressure to cut margins. From a Christian personalist and fair wage basis we would not want SM to develop today's impossibly low margin-based underpaying franchise structures that became a national scandal recently in Australian versions of US or international companies like 7/11, Domino's Pizza, Caltex and Chatime.<sup>38</sup>

Malloch and Grem note, too, that ensuring fair franchisers was easier in Wade's time when employees were mostly Christian and expected to hold 'high moral standards'. They argue that with growth in the 1960s-1970s and after Wade's death in 1973 'this expectation became more institutionalized' than personalised, as franchisees were to hold to the four commitments, whatever their own Christian or non-Christian beliefs. If they are right then this is a classic Weberian institutionalisation and bureaucratisation, of

which Pollard was always wary, overtaking an original entrepreneurial charisma.<sup>39</sup>

### Themes: A Scaffolding of Servanthood

This section and the next one continue the question from Goldberg's Narrativial Ethics Audit about themes or patterns in an organisation's history. They particularly explore the concept of 'service', built into ServiceMaster's name, and the theme of equality in the Relationship Foundation's criteria of relational proximity, and apply these to industrial/class and gender relations.

Even before Robert Greenleaf's famous 1977 book *Servant Leadership*,<sup>40</sup> SM founder Wade stressed servanthood of the Lord and to others. 'In business, the others are our stockholders, our boards, our staffs, our fellow businessmen, our competition, and most of all, our customers.' This servant leadership 'scaffolding'<sup>41</sup> holds SM together.

Pollard often told of a turning point in one of his final interviews for an SM management role with the two Kens. It was abruptly ended after he asked about promotion prospects. He was told bluntly by Hansen, as the latter walked out, that 'If you are not willing to serve anyone in this company, you are not the right person for this job'.<sup>42</sup> Pollard learnt from this and Wessler's regular management initiation into cleaning to identify with workers.<sup>43</sup> Even Jonathan Ward, generally regarded as a break in the tradition due to his deleting honouring God from the founding principles, affirmed servant leadership.<sup>44</sup>

Overall, SM leaders resisted the social and class tendency to stigmatise service or janitorial work. Wessner sought to instil a personal managerial experience of service work from the inside, of 'what it's like to wear a green uniform and be treated as a non-person'. It is management's 'responsibility to see that all employees are treated with dignity and ... that the job itself is dignifying'.<sup>45</sup> Malloch and Grem comment cynically: 'this seems to be a conspicuous place where the company's spiritual values are applied – or could be'.<sup>46</sup> They seem to have some doubts, but by the standards of the time, SM comes out well.

### Themes: Service and Gender Equality

One of the Relationship Foundation's key criteria of relational proximity is equality or parity: where relationships are more equal there is a greater felt sense of nearness.<sup>47</sup> For instance, the service economy workforce has disproportionately more women than men. But men may still work in roles requiring stereotypically 'female' skills (relational work, home cleaning, gardening etc.). SM's wide range of service work, inside and outside houses and organisations, meant more women worked for specific brands (e.g. Merry Maids) than for others (e.g. Terminix pest control). How 'servant leadership' fits into 'feminization of work' and its traditionally prescribed and underpaid caring roles is an important question requiring further research into, for example, SM's comparative gender-based pay rates, promotion policies etc. Depending on the case, it may or may not illustrate how noble concepts like service or vocation/calling can sometimes be abused ideologically.<sup>48</sup> The terminology itself is debated, with some arguing from distinct 'gender roles' prescribed by 'servant leadership' and others arguing for their dissolution.<sup>49</sup>

Robert Banks and Bernice M. Leadbetter provide a balanced discussion on this. They see that, despite other-worldly idealism, hidden hierarchies and patriarchies that servant leadership language can hide, 'companies that have adopted this philosophy ... have done extremely well'. ServiceMaster and furniture makers Herman Miller 'have featured in lists of highly profitable corporations and the best companies to work for. Still, this model [especially Greenleaf's] has limitations and difficulties at both the religious and practical level'.<sup>50</sup>

At the religious level, the Quaker Greenleaf treats Jesus mainly as a moral model, ignoring the supreme servanthood of the Cross and the Spirit's transformation of character, role and gifts. Banks and Leadbetter think it better to speak of 'followership' of Christ first, before leadership. Better also to reverse the terms in a more equal direction, that is, to 'leading servants', not allowing leadership to subtly subvert substantial Servanthood.<sup>51</sup> Despite these legitimate cautions and qualifications, SM's focus on Christ-centred, top-down servanthood, and its innovative ways of initiating its managers into it, measure up very well for its hey-day and still well today.

## TRANSITIONAL AND ENTREPRENEURIAL TURBULENCE VS TRADITION AND CONTINUITY

Goldberg's next question is: 'What is the role of tradition in your organization? Does the past shape the way your organization responds to present circumstances. How?'<sup>52</sup>

Malloch and Grem help us answer this question by setting SM within a 'spiritual traditions' framework. Less helpfully, in my view, they stress that SM is largely Protestant, with a stress on freedom – particularly Reformed, Lutheran and Baptist forms of freedom.<sup>53</sup> But SM was not narrowly sectarian. Like the similar Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA), on whose board Pollard served many years, it worked as a lynchpin between different traditions and networks, ecumenically, with Catholics<sup>54</sup> and Orthodox as part of Lewis' Mere Christianity or The Great Tradition. Further, the Protestant 'freedom' they refer to is not absolute autonomy, either individual or ecclesiastical, but freedom in service to others.

When Pollard caught SM's vision of servant leadership, it became significant for more than 25 years of SM's history, much under his leadership, sealing its tradition of service. The organisation's tradition shaped its responses to current circumstances or critical turning points, and impacted its values and intense induction processes of leaders into cleaning work. In Relationships Foundation terms this repeated emphasis is symptomatic of the 'continuity' of SM's story. In Malloch and Grem's terms this continuity is significant particularly for 'the company's top line of faith commitment'.<sup>55</sup>

SM and Pollard are vehicles of a broader, continuous Wheaton and BGEA tradition of personalist and service based-values that Pollard constantly refers to.<sup>56</sup> The BGEA has similar longevity and continuity to SM and Wheaton, existing more than sixty years, with only two CEOs. But Pollard's repeated image of the immovable continuity of SM's four key company values is set not just in marble but also in tension with pressures towards constant growth and change, in the images of his address 'Leadership

in a Time of Turbulence' and more personally in *The Tides of Life: Learning to Lead and Serve as You Navigate the Currents of Life*. How do we maintain a tradition of individual and institutional calling/personal purpose in such a liquifying context of rapid technological, economic, social and ecological change?<sup>57</sup>

There is great difficulty in maintaining a vibrant tradition across time, transitioning it into different times, after the loss of the original founder's charisma, or character, beyond bare biology. This is particularly relevant for Bill Pollard, reluctantly involved as he was in the Board's decision to continue the BGEA after Graham senior's inactivity and death. This was contrary to the Board's and Billy Graham's original intention to discontinue it. They later followed Billy's revised wish that his son Franklin would take over. Pollard overcame his reservations about that because of Franklin's commitment to and achievement of its goals for evangelistic and development growth.<sup>58</sup>

The question arises, however, and without any attribution of blame or lack of foresight to Pollard: does Franklin's loss, in the time of President Donald Trump, of key aspects of the qualitative character of Billy Graham's mission – for example his and its apolitical nature – approximate partly the loss of key values in the changeover from Pollard and his hand-picked ill-fated successor Carlos Cantu on to Jonathan Ward's leadership? Franklin's strident identification with and defence of Trump split Evangelical and Christian communities and made BGEA a mockery to many in the US and the world, putting party politics before 'honoring God in all things' first.<sup>59</sup> Was Franklin's political polemicism symbolically similar to Ward's taking the SM credo down from prime position at SM headquarters? And was Ward putting profit before people and a pluralistic culture before principle?<sup>60</sup>

## HONORING GOD IN PLURALISTIC CONTEXTS

This leads into the issue of religious and philosophical pluralism in relation to the first 'Honoring God' end goal of SM, especially relevant in an increasingly global context. Pollard states that 'Honoring God' was the sticking point for many in the fourfold credo.<sup>61</sup> But he gives more detail in an email response on 17 November 2014 to Niel Nielson, a former short-term SM worker.<sup>62</sup>

Nielson was by then working for Lippo, a large Indonesian company of Christian ethos but only indirectly evangelistic practice. He emailed Pollard on 5 November 2014 regarding 'how [SM] seeks to develop systems and people to enable the corporate values to "cascade" throughout the organisation ... thinking ... of the masterful ways in which ServiceMaster faithfully and effectively communicated and inculcated and lived out its corporate values for ... decades'.<sup>63</sup>

Pollard replied, filling in gaps about SM after he retired in 2002: 'The Company was sold to a ... private equity firm in 2007. The new owner changed the mission statement in 2010 and eliminated our objective "to Honor God in All We Do"'. Nielson asked whether this was in order to be more inclusive. No, Pollard answered: 'We did not use that as "a basis for exclusion"', but as 'the reason for our promotion of diversity, as we recognized that different people with different beliefs were all part

of God's work and the world that He so loves'.<sup>64</sup>

Though he was no expert, religious pluralism issues were carefully addressed by Pollard, especially as SM went global. He claimed SM had no explicit religious requirements, just 'a rigorous application process' of industry standards.<sup>65</sup> Similarly, the first commitment, for Pollard, was not

*an expression of our evangelical thought, or ... of denominational belief, or of ... the free enterprise system wrapped in a religious blanket. It was, instead, a response to the fundamental question of life, which transcends all cultures and economic or political systems. That is, is there a God? And if so what is my relationship to Him? .... There was a purpose for life and for work, and there was a reason for people to invest their lives in the growth and development of others.*<sup>66</sup>

Pollard told the Indonesian-based Nielsen that these objectives were universal, as tested by SM's

*200,000 people in the U.S. and 45 foreign countries serving over 45 million customers. ... applied across many different cultures .... Sometimes they required modification for ... meeting local requirements. For example, in China, the government would not allow the first objective to be used in the organization's documents of the firm. Instead, we used the objective "To Honor Truth In All We Do". In our implementation of this objective we ... referred to the words of Jesus "I am the way, the truth and the light" [sic]. In the Mideast the objective was accepted as stated. But though their view of God is quite different than ours it provided ... a platform to discuss the reality of who God is ....*<sup>67</sup>

Pollard's relative theistic pluralism was principled, pointing to God's absolute transcendence.

## PERSONS VS PROFITS?

Goldberg further asks in his Narrative Ethics Audit: 'Does your organization serve any purpose that transcends money? If so, what is it? Is the world a better place because your organization is in it?'<sup>68</sup>

Bill Pollard's clearest answer to this question is in his *Serving Two Masters*? He insisted on a question mark contrary to the publishers because Jesus said 'no one can serve two masters' (Matt 6:24). The Master in the ServiceMaster name reflects the priority of Christ as noted. In the four SM commitments the theistically stated end goal of 'Honoring God in all things' was set above the means goal of profit, though not necessarily contradictory. This contrasts with Milton Friedman's famous 'theory of the firm' and its 'only ... social responsibility of business – to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase profits'.<sup>69</sup>

Yet Pollard still advocates 'The Virtue of Profit' 'as more than a scorecard for investors on Wall Street. It has a direct relationship to the truth and value of our promise to the customer and to the people' who are the Soul of the Firm.<sup>70</sup> He notes that the book *The Service Profit Chain* shows how: '1. Profitability is directly linked to the loyalty of the customer, which 2. Is directly related to the loyalty, commitment, demeanour, nurturing, and ability of the service provider'.<sup>71</sup> This loyalty in turn is related to the training, development and motivation of the firm, drawn at SM from the foundational commitments.

Pollard describes these in personalist style as 'a triangle of people principles ... nurtur[ing] the soul of the firm' or 'three principles of people value [value to customers, owners and each other] correspond[ing] to three of our company objectives: To pursue excellence, To grow profitably, and To help people develop...'.<sup>72</sup> To Pollard this development is disciplined by the stock exchange and competition: 'As a business firm we wanted to excel at generating products and creating value for our shareholders. If we didn't ... then we didn't belong in the ballgame'. Pollard played hardball in a competitive environment. A key SM Leadership Principle was that 'There are no friendly competitors'.<sup>73</sup>

Pollard's Foreword to Adam Smith's *Excerpts from The Theory of Moral Sentiments*<sup>74</sup> affirms the creative and competitive basis of Capitalism. He begins with Joseph Schumpeter's 'theory of creative destruction that fosters the innovations necessary to fuel the next cycle of economic growth'. Pollard sees that Smith's invisible hand guides the system, causing self-interest of profit seekers and the 'discipline of competition' to provide the greatest sum of goods at the cheapest price.<sup>75</sup>

But writing at the height of the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), Pollard also probes its possible causes and responses to it. He is clearly dissatisfied with rewards for market indiscipline like golden lifeboats for greedy CEOs, government bailouts, stimulus packages and external controls. While we need law and the 'visible hand' of government regulation to help 'provide stability' and moral clarity, this is insufficient for Pollard's personalism.

*It is people who make markets work ... and are moral agents and actors. In dynamic and interconnected markets, the ethical and moral judgements required of business leaders cannot be determined solely by ... rules – nor can a social or commercially desired result always be achieved by ... government funding.*<sup>76</sup>

Likewise, 'Legislative actions may bring a higher standard of accountability and may curb certain behaviors', but they cannot create positive virtues like honesty, integrity and trust. 'Nor can government force respect for what is or what ought to be, nor nurture a sentiment for the interest of others.' Here's where Smith's other, but neglected, classic, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, is necessary, though Pollard doesn't pretend Smith is Christian, given he abandoned it at Oxford for Deism.<sup>77</sup>

Pollard notes how Smith sees constraint on self-interest coming from 'sympathy' for others' acts and also from self-examination 'as we imagine any other fair and impartial spectator would examine it'. Such 'social reciprocity acts as a limiting force on what might otherwise be unbridled, amoral self-interest'.<sup>78</sup>

However, Pollard observes that Smith cannot see reciprocity in positive Christian moral or redemptive terms, as his core concepts are self-understanding and 'self-command'.<sup>79</sup> Yet Pollard asks if Smith's secular surrogates are necessary: 'Is it helpful, in our pluralistic societies, to speak ... of such proxies as the *impartial spectator* and the *invisible hand* so that we can consider afresh' God as the source of morality – 'to nurture the conscience of the human soul and constrain evil?'<sup>80</sup>

Citing Solzhenitsyn's panoramic view of human perversity on both sides of the Berlin wall, Pollard sees Smith as insufficient. Pollard's transcendent personalism

prioritises God's truth and moral power. Beyond SM's profits, in his eyes, lay the 'Lasting Measurement' of the development of people and 'a community to help shape character ... [through] soulcraft', asking 'what is profitable for the whole person?'<sup>81</sup> As Jesus said: 'For what will it profit them to gain the whole world but forfeit their life?' (Mark 8:36, NRSV).

Yet Pollard recognises, beyond, I suspect, his SM predecessors, 'that it is not the role of the firm to mandate any person's belief. It is not ... a place of worship', but 'a moral community for encouraging the exploration of truth ... by a moral compass that points to a true North ... of concern for the interests of others'. Pollard's personalism here goes beyond Smith's Stoic Deism or even possible theism, and is adaptable to contexts of post-modern pluralism. It is also linked to C.S. Lewis' universal natural law ethic in 'The Law of Tao'.<sup>82</sup> But Pollard's and Lewis's own motivation is ultimately Christocentric.

## CONTINUITY AND TRANSITION OF LEADERSHIP, RELATIONSHIP AND STORY

One of the Relationship Foundation's key criteria of relational nearness is 'continuity' of narrative or 'organisation across time'.<sup>83</sup> Continuity can include

*a consistent and coherent approach to ... management ... The coherent momentum gained by ongoing contact with the coherence of a storyline ... increase[s] loyalty and commitment to each other as well as ... the cause or task. This may develop shared identity, growing reciprocal obligations, increased trust and ownership of a task or issue – through "previous investment".*<sup>84</sup>

The intense investment in the SM fourfold cord of commitments through thorough induction of management and employees meant that the narrative was not easily forgotten and was critical to SM's lasting success. Such continuity of adherence to a normative narrative fits with Pollard's overlapping shingle effect of leadership moving from CEO to Chair that limited the loss of corporate memory. The passing of the baton of four key commitments was seen in the flow of the first four Wheaton-trained CEOs of SM and the shared heritage of 150+ years of Wheaton education and Evangelical ethos. 'Such shared momentum is ... relatively easily maintained',<sup>85</sup> according to *The Relational Lens*, and so it was in the case of SM for more than 55 years.

But relatively quickly this continuity was cut. A carefully prepared leadership transition from Bill Pollard in the normal SM shingles way, of a new-in house CEO and Pollard moving to Chairman to ensure overlapping strengths and continuity, came unstuck, leading to not only a double leadership transition but also a difficult directional transition.

To explain further, in the mid 1990s two key unanswered questions were left at the end of SM's 20-year planning period. The first, as in the adage 'success without succession is not success', concerned maintaining continuity through succession. In 1994 Pollard's partner Carlos Cantu, previously president of recently acquired Terminix, with strong operating experience and team-building skills, was apprenticed as head of SM's key consumer services division. He was then the fifth SM CEO, but by far the shortest, for only five years, till stomach cancer struck in early 1999. The board asked chairman



Pollard, who had followed the pattern inherited from the two previous CEOs-turned-chairmen, to return as CEO, but in true SM style 'succession at all levels of the organization' was his goal.<sup>86</sup> Other insiders were CEO candidates but the board was unsure and time was short.

This was partly due to the second, urgent and unanswered question regarding future direction and structure that ideally should have involved the new CEO, so that they could really own and direct it. Pollard, influenced by Peter Drucker, believed SM had outgrown its current direction and structure, inhibiting growth. It needed to become either an

*integrated operating company with substantial operational cost savings passed onto customers or a holding company with separate subsidiaries with less savings. However, a holding company would be more flexible for acquisitions and releasing existing businesses to shareholders as separate public companies and potential new value. Here Pollard was following former share-holder and investment guru Warren Buffet's advice to the board that high growth often creates an anchor, diminishing value without strategic structural or directional change.*<sup>87</sup>

The board eventually selected external CEO candidate Jonathan Ward, who started in 2001. Pollard stayed another year as advisor, again seeking continuity while in transition. Six months in Ward decided against both of the board's and Pollard's preferred options. He sold the management services business and focused on continued consumer services growth. Ward had an ambitious, short-term shareholder value-maximisation approach. If selling the company would maximise shareholder returns, that's what he and the board would do. This ignored what had been Pollard's and previous CEOs' and boards' priorities on the other non-public shareholders 'including the owner-employees, who were in it for the long-term'.<sup>88</sup> Pollard had said plainly that the short-term interests of the public shareholders and the long-term interests of the owner-employees etc. could be reconciled. But it was more risky, and boards tend to be risk averse. Concerning Ward, Pollard was clear: 'I did not agree with his conclusions and felt they could have an adverse effect on the people and value of the company'.<sup>89</sup> He added that, after five years of stalled growth, Ward was terminated and replaced by a board member, and SM was sold to a private equity company.

The issue of going public or staying a private company was important for SM's ability to negotiate change and continuity. It arose during financial problems in the early 2000s. SM agreed to a buy-out by private equity firm Clayton, Dubilier and Rice (CD&R) in 2007 for \$US4.7 billion. But by 2010 they offered public shares again. This to-ing and fro-ing raises questions about complications for faith-based companies regarding public or private ownership and their different possibilities for expressing ultimate divine ownership – 'the earth is the Lord's and all that is in it' (Psalm 24:1, NRSV). Pollard saw the Wheaton and BGEA boards reflecting a strong sense of divine ownership, who saw their stewardship and long-term development of their ministries as priority.<sup>90</sup> It doesn't take too much reading between the lines to understand that he saw the SM board of the early 2000s as having failed its larger stewardship obligations to the Lord and the worker-owners.

The leadership and ownership levels were not the only critical changes. The goal posts had been moved. It was not just that overtly Christian prayer and Bible study from Wade's days had diminished at SM – Pollard noted the importance of his own decision not to lead Bible studies or invite people to them lest they identify publicly as Christian to curry favour with the boss. As mentioned, Malloch and Grem note that the primary commitment 'to honor God in all we do' was maintained from the two Kens through Pollard's leadership, but not under Ward's tenure, though new owners may be blameworthy. SM was still 'faith-friendly', but not always overtly faith-based. Mutual service was honoured, so a boss's personal worth to the business was judged largely on '... his [or her] ability to help people grow'. But there were differences about how this worked out in practice with the varied faith of managers, franchisees and workers.<sup>91</sup> Pollard regrets the loss of explicit faith foundations but still sees many living them out at SM.<sup>92</sup>

However, the baton seems to have been dropped after Pollard's second spell as CEO, with the appointment of Ward, new owners and the dismantling of key symbols like the statue of Jesus' foot washing. Contrary to Ward's inclusion in the SM spiritual succession in Malloch and Grem's usually helpful summary,<sup>93</sup> there was a huge difference between Wade's founding vision, loyally developed by long-term successors Hansen, Wessner and Pollard, and Ward's erasing of the crucial commitment of 'Honoring God in all we do'.

In a revealing chapter on 'The Reality and Responsibility of Authority', Pollard relates what went wrong at SM after his resignation as CEO. He sees the Wheaton and BGEA boards and CEO selection processes as exemplary, surprisingly but revealingly not mentioning ServiceMaster.<sup>94</sup> The Wheaton 1861 charter is viewed favourably as a statement of a board's 'responsibility ... to do all business that may be necessary and appropriate to secure the permanency and prosperity of the College'.<sup>95</sup> Clearly permanency or continuity was a key value for all.

Ward's appointment was in apparent contradiction to Pollard's strongly expressed preference for insider appointments to ensure continuity.<sup>96</sup>

*During my years of service on various boards, I have been actively involved in the identification and selection of twelve CEOs. Based on that experience, I believe there is a better chance of success if an internal candidate can be chosen. Knowing the candidate over a period of years and having the experience of understanding his or her successes and failures and their acceptance, or lack thereof, by the people of the organization provides that edge for a successful selection and transition.*<sup>97</sup>

Philosophically, Pollard states, contrary to Jim Collins' *Built to Last* and his admired aim of 'preservation' from the Wheaton charter, that 'Businesses are Built to Serve, Not to Last .... If the business is no longer fulfilling its priority it has no reason to exist in a free market. The business firm is a vehicle ... not an institution to be worshipped'.<sup>98</sup> Ecclesiastes would agree; all things 'under the sun' die.

Always the personalist, Pollard consoled himself that the people SM developed were what lasts. Even if they are no longer with the firm, they continue to reflect its original objectives elsewhere as they 'invest in the growth and

development of people',<sup>99</sup> SM's second end goal.

Despite appearances, the underlying consistency in Pollard's personalism and critique of SM's leadership after him is his priority on a person's eternal dignity and destiny. Planning is always limited temporally and only God always plans for eternity, as Ecclesiastes 3:11 and James 4:13-15 admonish.<sup>100</sup> 'Therefore the effect of our plans on the welfare of people and who they are becoming in this life and ... beyond should always be our primary focus.'<sup>101</sup>

Pollard applied this principle from board to shopfloor. His criteria for an effective Board and CEO included development of the organisation's people, their increasing work satisfaction and layoffs handled fairly and empathetically.<sup>102</sup>

## PERSONALISM AND THE FIRM AS A MORAL COMMUNITY

SM and Pollard have been recognised by various national and international industry awards as having a remarkable record in prioritising the human person and developing relational workplaces, but this is not easily quantified. Finance is much easier to report. In the latest development of the Relationships Foundation's model, *The Relational Lens*, the authors note that 'It is widely recognised that social sustainability has been the weakest element of 'triple bottom line' reporting'. For example, 'in contrast to GRI [Global Reporting Initiatives] environmental indicators – reporting on social performance occurs infrequently and inconsistently across organisations'. Modelling and quantifying social impact is more complex, not least because of 'differences of view over the desired nature of the social state to be sustained or worked towards'.<sup>103</sup>

What Pollard called 'The Drucker Difference' in consulting included the following 'social state': 'encouraging a vision for the firm to be a moral community for the development of human character', as Grem notes. Peter Drucker was 'the most influential manager of the post-war era' and Drucker's influence on Pollard and on SM's personalism and people-building approach was profound, particularly at critical junctures. Drucker's own influences were non-Protestant, more European philosophy based, upholding individual value and 'moral universals'. But Drucker provided Pollard with a bridging language for expressing Christian personalism in an increasingly pluralistic global era.<sup>104</sup>

In *Concept of the Corporation*,<sup>105</sup> Drucker's form of universal personalism conceptualised 'A corporate soul ... created and sustained by the practical, wise, and responsible executive, the businessman-turned-pastor who recognized that the corporation itself was the preeminent form of community in modern life'.<sup>106</sup> Pollard fits this form of pastor-CEO well. Bill Pollard often cited Drucker's mantra regarding the company being a laboratory for the liberal art of generating 'a moral community'.<sup>107</sup> In practice this 'should be on the agenda of the board of every organization ... It is a governance issue'.<sup>108</sup>

Yet in response to Drucker's key questions to SM's board, 'What is your business?' and 'What is your core competency?', the board wrongly gave a functional list of activities. Drucker corrected them: 'Your business is the training and development of people. You are good at

it'.<sup>109</sup> But the Board seemed unaware of SM's key quality. Pollard, channelling Drucker, states: 'when management is practiced as a liberal art, the work environment becomes a catalyst for innovation, respect, and performance that often exceeds expectations. This was our grand experiment at ServiceMaster',<sup>110</sup> but perhaps less the later boards Pollard worked with than the CEO's.

Drucker saw such people-making as historically distinctive to SM. Its strength was 'developing the dignity of the service worker through ongoing training, motivation, and pride when a job was well done with improved productivity' through listening to workers' wisdom. This was a major gain on the de-personalised Industrial Era treatment of U.S. workers.<sup>111</sup>

Pollard also cites Harvard Business School Professor Jim Heskett's comment that SM 'had broken the cycle of failure for the service worker by focusing on the development of the whole person in the work environment and by providing meaning ... for even the most mundane tasks'. SM 'reengineered jobs, provided training ... and attempted to deliver a level of self-esteem that many workers have never had'.<sup>112</sup> SM's holism contradicts Henry Ford's famous quip: 'Why is it that I always get a whole person when all I really wanted was a pair of hands?' However, Pollard laments that SM, particularly its board, didn't follow more of Heskett's excellent observations above and advice about SM in *The Culture Cycle*.<sup>113</sup> Perhaps some of SM's culture was ebbing away at the end.

## PROFITABLE PERSONALISM?

To be more specific and biographical, both of Pollard and SM's personalism, to what if any extent did the means goal of the rapid growth of the company by acquisition, initiated by him only three years into his time as CEO of SM,<sup>114</sup> clash with the ultimate end goal of the spiritual/moral growth of the individual person or soul? Does the former irrevocably endanger the latter, as in Alasdair MacIntyre's Aristotelian model of the tension between external/institutional and internal goods?<sup>115</sup> Or does Drucker's classic teleological management model, of the purpose of business being not to make a profit but 'create a customer', with profit being the external, test the effectiveness of this internal practice and relationship?<sup>116</sup>

This win-win is perhaps expressed best by SM's and Pollard's focus on improving worker satisfaction and productivity as a virtue<sup>117</sup> and extending recurrent consumer services (a form of relational continuity). This saw the consumer services arm grow into SM's largest business division, extending its fundamental business model. As SM grew, a virtuous circle maximised returns for consumers, workers and stockholders. 'Every 6 cents ... invested generated a dollar's revenue and three cents profit'.<sup>118</sup> As Pollard states: 'For us it was not a matter of maximizing profits; instead, we focused on a continuity of growth – a continuity that continued for more than fifty years and provided a growing value for our owners'.<sup>119</sup>

Continuity of Growth was in turn related to continuity of persons, averaging 15 years' service per person in SM. This led in turn to more experienced, person-alised input and increased productivity which also flowed into workers' profit-sharing as SM share partners. Pollard showed great delight in re-telling how, having achieved

SM's public partnership, an employee shareholder called out loudly to him: "'Howdy, partner". That said it all to me. The partnership ... was alive and well in the way we worked. Rose and others had been partners with me in accomplishing an important objective of growth and value'.<sup>120</sup> This is one possible response, in today's climate, to the broken nexus between productivity and wages. Contemporary stress on employee flexibility to the detriment of stability and continuity has also led to inhumane pace (e.g. Amazon Fulfilment Centres<sup>121</sup>), dissatisfaction and precarity, and low or even negative real wage growth.<sup>122</sup>

While profit isn't primary, to Pollard it is a good measuring stick of how well purposeful, fulfilled workers can meet customers' needs, repeatedly. SM expresses its spiritual values in relation to 'doing well', through profit, but also 'doing good', in the service economy. The 'doing good' part is not on the side, in occasional charity, but core business, done regularly and fairly.

### JOHN: A PERSON/SOUL WITH DIGNITY

Bill Pollard respects standard measures of business success in profits, customer service and shareholder value, but for him the primary value is people's changed lives. They alone are eternal. He illustrates this poignantly with the story of John who joined SM in 1983 at the end of high school. 'He had some special needs' but a job was carefully 'crafted for him to make a meaningful contribution'. It was a long-term investment expressing Matthew 25:40's priority on serving Christ in the least. He got a fair wage, belonging and treatment 'as the subject of work not just the object'.<sup>123</sup> He became Pollard's friend. John was an extraordinary example of Pollard's proud stories reflecting the high human and spiritual standing of his employees, who were also often friends.<sup>124</sup>

After retiring, Pollard wrote sorrowfully of Ward's sale of John's business unit. The buyer still employed John but sensitivity to his needs eroded and he was eventually sacked. Distressed, he asked unsuccessfully to farewell fellow employees. He was escorted from the building via the back door by HR – the R (Resources) prioritised over the H (Human).

To Pollard,

*The cold and clinical termination process ... followed procedures without acknowledging the dignity and worth of the person ... or what he had contributed ... in a way that overcame some of his limitations and was an inspiration .... John had grown and developed as a person ... with ServiceMaster and had benefited the people he worked with, including me'.*

Pollard rightly asks the key Drucker and SM question:

*Did the decision to terminate John and the way it was handled reflect the actions of a moral community ... that embraced care and empathy for the dignity and special needs of the terminated person? Where was the soul of the firm? Did my successor get the right price for the business ... but fail to understand the buyer's possible lack of a 'soul' in the way people would be treated?<sup>125</sup>*

### SOULS – OF PERSONS AND FIRMS

The use of 'Soul' above has a more metaphorical and relational sense of the lastingness of loving, personal

relationships, not a dualistic, platonic eternal part of humanity that Pollard sometimes unbiblically reflects. Pollard's interpretation of C.S. Lewis' famous *Weight of Glory* quote regarding the priority of people over institutions and culture is largely correct in its prioritising of persons, of which SM was generally an excellent example. But Pollard is incorrect, and Lewis possibly inconsistent, in apparently negating institutions and culture as intrinsically lesser.<sup>126</sup> Lewis, while platonically influenced, did not swallow the whole platonic dualistic package. His perspective was more an incarnational sacramentalism of each person, and every part of creation, being a kind of pre-echo of eternal realities.<sup>127</sup>

Pollard's relatively dualistic anthropology leads to a series of binary contrasts:

- Heaven(s) vs Earth<sup>128</sup>
- Persons vs structures/institutions<sup>129</sup>
- Eternal vs temporal<sup>130</sup>
- Spiritual vs Material<sup>131</sup>
- Persons vs Machines/Technology.<sup>132</sup>

Pollard very rarely mentions the creation/cultural mandate of Gen 1:26-28 and Psalm 8. As a biblical personalist, following Lewis, he often mentions humanity's being made in God's image. But his relational theology is only a personal relational theology, not recognising the delegated kingly dominion relationship between humanity and the earth. This flows from our imaging the divine King through all our work in God's sacred temple of creation. Pollard's strong emphasis on heaven, but not the new heavens and new earth, while traditionally Evangelical and one side of Lewis, nonetheless downplays the earthy, material side of Scripture and Lewis.

Linked to the creation/cultural commission and its basis for human servanthood to (Gen 2:15) and stewardship over creation, there are passages that see not only personal continuity from this life to the next, but also a physical, purified (not destroyed, cf. 1 Cor 3:10-15, 2 Peter 3:10-13) and transformed continuity of our resurrected bodies and all creation (Rev 21-22:7).<sup>133</sup> This material transformation is also institutional, as receiving the fruits of our labour implies a sense of unalienated labour and lasting institutional justice. And the new Jerusalem is surely depicted as a lasting institution, the capital of the new creation, as seen in Isaiah 65:17-23 (NRSV):

*17 For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth;*

*18 ... to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight...*

*21 They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit...*

*22 and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.*

In the end, the kings of the earth bring the rich gifts of their culture, and Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (a quote from Isaiah 60), into the new Jerusalem (Rev 21:24-26). Karl Barth thought the Louvre and Mozart's music would be in the new heavens and new earth. The new creation outdoes even our grandest imaginings, surpassing all comparisons (Rom 8:18).

C.S. Lewis's *The Great Divorce* similarly pictures a

holistic and materially imaginative heaven. The reprobates who come from below are like transparent ghosts, 'and the light, the grass, the trees were made ... of some different substance, so much solidier than things in our country that men were ghosts in comparison'.<sup>134</sup> Lewis' conclusion to the Narnia series in *The Last Battle* likewise looks forward to a deeper, more real Narnia. Such is the everlasting earthiness of the new heavens and new earth.<sup>135</sup>

Chris Armstrong, former Director of Opus, The Art of Work institute at Wheaton College, whom Pollard may know, concludes that, if we reconnect with Medieval Christians and their modern friends like Lewis, we could

*re-sacralize the supposedly secular spaces of our work... by joining the ever-present God in the redemptive, though always partial, healing of the very systems and structures that organize our labor ... – a truly sacramental view of the world and work, flowing from a proper intellectual and devotional absorption in the Incarnation.*<sup>136</sup>

Though Pollard may not theologise that way, in practice and in speaking of intertwinement of the firm and formation of persons through lifelong learning, he shows how institutions can be healed and healing.<sup>137</sup>

## MULTIPLICITY

Once again we draw upon the Relational Proximity model, this time to highlight the relational criterion of 'multiplexity' – or seeing people in the round as persons-in-roles – family-members, citizens etc. – which was a strong point of SM. This was shown in two particular examples: its family-friendliness and its treatment of those with disability. SM recognised the family as the basic spiritual, economic and social unit for the welfare of society. They encouraged families in their business practices. Pollard states:

*Spouses were typically involved in the initial interviewing [and] in business meetings and other company affairs. We encouraged social relationships among our employees and the inclusion of children in understanding the parent's work environment. This was not just good business; it was the right thing to do.*<sup>138</sup>

But it had mutual benefits. Chip Pollard, despite pressures of his Dad's work documents arriving on family holidays, saw mutual benefits and even a merging of character between his father and SM.<sup>139</sup>

Multiplexity is related to seeing people in a range of roles as whole people,<sup>140</sup> 'More than just a pair of hands' in Henry Ford's terms. This also means asking 'Does Your Customer Have a Face?'<sup>141</sup> and answering resoundingly 'Yes'. Customers are persons with needs and desires, not just walking wallets. Pollard doesn't cite the great Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas on the absolute obligation we have to the face of people – 'the infinite in the face'.<sup>142</sup> But his position is similar to Levinas'. For both there is a unique force to the other's face, a kind of ontological obligation. This stress on person-alised service is key to SM's success.

Similarly, Pollard's questions of potential leaders were multiplex, covering their moral compass, reading habits, intellectual sources, family life and faith. One wonders whether he got to ask these of Ward.<sup>143</sup> For Pollard personal behaviour is not merely personal but indicative

of character and trustworthiness. He illustrates from the adulterous relationship of a former Boeing CEO with an employee. The CEO resigned because of damage to Boeing's reputation, but the chair whitewashed it as the CEO had not violated Boeing's code of conduct. Pollard pulls no punches, in contrast to Franklin Graham's later privatised defence of Trump: 'You can't bifurcate moral standards. They apply to one's public or corporate life as well as one's personal life'.<sup>144</sup> To paraphrase, the personal is professional, and moral.

## CORPORATE INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES, CEREMONIES AND RITUALS

Persons are not just static beings; they are people in process, becoming who God means them to be. Along with intrinsic dignity they have a sense of vocational purpose and eternal destiny. This is regularly affirmed at SM by rituals of 'Recognition and Celebration' such as 'We Serve Day' and 'Pride Day'. The latter recognises accomplishments of teams in hospitals and education facilities, marked by receiving a carnation for their lapel, bringing tears to some. Pollard says that 'there is value in the recognition process – especially for those who are often ignored'. 'We Serve Day' gives opportunity to those in 'routine and mundane' serving roles to be subjects, not objects, to voice both their good and bad experiences, such as when an MBA, married to a nurse, was snubbed repeatedly by nurses when on his knees cleaning a birthing ward.<sup>145</sup> Cleaners too should be respected, and their recognition ritualised as an aspect of corporate cultural continuity.

## TECHNOLOGY AND PERSONS

This personalist recognition of intangible work and invisible people is also involved in designing technology for cleaning so that people are not bent over. It not only causes bad backs, but also being relatively invisible, being unfaced. In the more humane design of their mops, for example, SM's VP for technical development's PhD is less significant than his 'empathy' for the worker. Everything is designed 'with both the job and the person in mind'. For Pollard,

*Our goal is not to find an alternative to people, but instead, to grow people – to be more effective. A person with both a clear direction and purpose to serve provides ... dependability and response greater than any machine ... [.] able to meet and solve the unexpected, and to exceed the customer's expectations.*<sup>146</sup>

Pollard's priority on persons affects research and development into 'tools, equipment, and products':

*If you look at people as a costly and unreliable element, then you will look at your machines and technology as a way to reduce or eliminate jobs. We take another view. In the service business, technology provides a tool of production, not a factor of production.' Following Drucker, 'this means that the effectiveness of a tool is more dependent on how it is used than on its structure or design.'*<sup>147</sup>

But this cliché is known in technology studies as the use-abuse fallacy of technological neutrality, ignoring its value-ladenness.

However, for all the merits of SM's personalised culture prioritising persons over technological machines, questions arise regarding contemporary application and relevance in today's rush towards technologically increased productivity. In a 'creatively destructive' corporate world typified by Mark Zuckerberg and Facebook's motto 'Move Fast and Break Things',<sup>148</sup> to what extent is Pollard and SM's personal and institutional vocational vision, emphasising leadership continuity in a service context, applicable for business today with its focus on the short-term agility, flexibility and nimbleness of hi-tech and gig economies? Does such corporate 'creative destruction' destroy character, shared risk and relational development, dissolving even the persons themselves – reduced to mere technological collateral damage?<sup>149</sup> While Pollard and SM were relatively ahead of their time, they were not absolutely ahead. They were also of their time.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has used two intersecting frameworks. The first framework measures relational proximity in terms of equality, continuity, multiplexity etc. The other framework is a narrational framework exploring the role of character/virtue reinforced through connections to story via rituals and traditions. The brightly lit mega-theme running through these frameworks or traditions as largely maintained and carried by Pollard and SM is that of the person-alising of work in Pollard's Christian personalist philosophy and practice.

Despite its elements of dualism, which we have critiqued, it is not a vicious dualism, but a varied, relative dualism of 'soul' as in some sense the personal centre, and yet also a corporate, relational, cultural even institutional entity, The Soul of the Firm. It is this, in the Wheaton-Billy Graham-ServiceMaster culture of great leadership and philosophical continuity, employee participation and profit-partnership, that enables the passing on of the relational baton through decades of distinguished service. Its abrupt break in continuity with Ward, after Pollard's designated successor fell ill, especially the disposing of the priority of honouring God, was regrettable, though many of the franchises still maintained its priority in protest. Such a continuous and cohesive chain of God-centred servant leadership was a rare, though not infallible, achievement. It should not be forgotten in today's heedless rush to 'creative destruction'.

## GORDON PREECE

is the Director of Ethos and of the Centre for Religion and Social Policy, University of Divinity. He was a PhD student of Robert Banks and successor to him as Director of Macquarie Christian Studies Institute.

This paper is double blind peer reviewed, and its publication has been supported by the University of Divinity Centre for Religion and Social Policy.

## Endnotes

1. This paper was researched while on a Bill Pollard Faith and Business Research Fellowship I enjoyed in mid-June 2018 at Seattle Pacific University's wonderful Center for Integrity in Business. Special thanks to Director Gene Kim, Al Erisman, Denise Daniels, Kenmore Wong and librarian Colin Lewis for their hospitality and interest. My fellow pioneer Pollard scholars proved wonderful conversation partners illustrating the personal and relational qualities Bill Pollard exemplified, not least in our phone discussion.  
Disclosure statement: I received accommodation and airfares from the Fellowship. The relatively minimal payment was passed on by Seattle Pacific to the Theology of Work Project, not to me personally. No pressure was applied in any way to go soft on Pollard.
2. Michael Goldberg ed. *Against the Grain: New Approaches to Professional Ethics* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2001), Appendix: 'Ethics Audit Worksheet', 193-194.
3. See John Ashcroft, Roy Childs, Alison Myers and Michael Schluter, *The Relational Lens: Understanding, Measuring and Managing Stakeholder Relationships* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). This builds on *The R Factor* by Michael Schluter and David Lee (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1993) and *The R Option* (Cambridge: Relationships Foundation, 2003).
4. As J.H. Oldham's *Real Life is Meeting* (Christian News-Letter Books, 1942) says, 'Reality is the lived relation...'. In *Relational Lens* terms, relationships: create value of all sorts; are 'a source of competitive advantage'; are 'a key to better risk management'; are 'a goal as well as a means' (p. 11); are 'a skillset'; and are 'the cornerstone of wellbeing' (12-13). The Relationships Foundation's relational analyses include various institutions, churches, prisons, schools, the UK National Health System and peacemaking in Sudan and Korea.
5. The Relational Proximity Framework (RPF) uses five measurement scales: '1. Directness: using contact and personal encounter to create encounters and enable clear and effective communications', e.g. SM glass offices, symbolising transparency and accessibility. '2. Continuity: over time creating a storyline and sense of relational momentum and resilience. 3. Multiplicity: or multi-threaded, holistic breadth of relationship in different contexts. 4. Parity: or relative equality of power ... to promote fairness, participatory and respectful relationships. 5. Commonality: sharing of purpose and values to create relational alignment, synergy and unity'. See Ashcroft et al., *Relational Lens*, 34.
6. See Ashcroft et al., *Relational Lens*, Ch. 3: 'How to Measure Relationships' and Ch. 11: 'Managing, Measuring, Reporting, Regulating'. See also p. 221: 'Relational Proximity is an effective tool for measuring relationships ... in organisations. It has been developed across twenty years of research, consultancy and social reform.... in business, public services, public policy and peace building, combined with ... many different academic disciplines'.
7. While perhaps most developed amongst Catholics, personalism was a wider movement including Protestants like Karl Barth and John Oldham, philosopher John McMurray, Jewish philosopher Martin Buber and Anglo-Catholic C.S. Lewis. It stressed the relationally constituted dignity of the human person as a theological third way between hard communal Communism and hard Capitalist individualism. See J. Hellman, 'John Paul II and the Personalist Movement', *Cross Currents* (Winter 1980-1981), 407-419.
8. See C. William Pollard, *The Tides of Life: Learning to Lead and Serve as You Navigate the Currents of Life* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2014). Cf. p. 47 on his father's loss and p. 43 on his 'mentors', SM's two previous CEOs and chairs, Ken Hansen and Ken Wessner.
9. Charles W. Pollard III, 'Afterword', in C. William Pollard, *The Soul of the Firm* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 159-160. The public partnership built on the principles of mutualism though the four partners, and Pollard firstly, each provided considerable capital and bore 'a big risk' (154). An interesting global and Christian comparison is the Australian Mutual Provident (AMP) insurance company
10. 'About Servicemaster', jobs.servicemaster.com.
11. Goldberg, *Against the Grain*, 193-194.
12. C. William Pollard, 'Leadership Transition and Long-Term Ministry Sustainability', *C. William Pollard Papers* 230 (2015),

- digitalcommons.spu.edu/pollard\_papers/230, 7.
13. Pollard, *Tides*, 43-44.
  14. Pollard, *Tides*, 43-44.
  15. Pollard, *Soul*, 139. Cf. 156-157 where Pollard applied the overlapping shingles metaphor 'as each person has opportunity to major in their strengths, they can also complement the weaknesses of others'. Placement of ordinary people according to their extraordinary strengths is a key test of leadership success and the firm's value, its very soul.
  16. Pollard, *Soul*, 14.
  17. Cited in Pollard, *Soul*, 156.
  18. Pollard, *Soul*, 147.
  19. Pollard, *Soul*, 13.
  20. Goldberg, *Against the Grain*, 193.
  21. Theodore Roosevelt Malloch, 'ServiceMaster', Ch. 4 in *Practical Wisdom in Management: Business Across Spiritual Traditions* (Yorkshire, UK: Greenleaf, 2015), co-authored with Darren E. Grem, 49-50.
  22. As Peter Drucker noted for the SM Board. See Pollard, *Tides*, 199.
  23. Grem, *Blessings of Business*, 87.
  24. '1. Is it the truth? 2. Is it fair to all concerned? 3. Will it build goodwill and better friendships? 4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned?' It later became Rotary's test. See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbert\_J.\_Taylor#The\_Four-Way\_Test.
  25. Grem, *Blessings of Business*, 87-88.
  26. Grem, *Blessings of Business*, 90-91.
  27. Malloch and Grem, 'ServiceMaster', 49.
  28. Marion E. Wade, *The Lord is my Counsel* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966), cited in Malloch and Grem, 'ServiceMaster', 50.
  29. Grem, *Blessings of Business*, 88-89.
  30. Goldberg, *Against the Grain*, 193.
  31. christianity9to5.org/honoring-god-at-servicemaster.
  32. Cited in Lewis D. Solomon, *Evangelical Christian Executives: A New Model for Business Corporations* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2004).
  33. Acquisitions from 1973 to 1985 in education and medical areas increased return on equity to average 30%+ p.a. post tax, aimed at doubling every five years. See Ronald Hencoff, 'ServiceMaster Piety, Profits, and Productivity', *Fortune Magazine*, 29 June 1992.
  34. See Malloch and Grem, *Practical Wisdom*, 54 n. 6, for 1993-1997 news articles concerning ServiceMaster being 'overpaid', 'axed' or 'negligent'.
  35. Pollard, *Tides*, 185.
  36. Pollard, *Tides*, 185.
  37. Malloch, and Grem, *Practical Wisdom*, 55.
  38. Sarah Dankert, Cole Latimer and Patrick Hatch, 'A world of kings and slaves: Is franchise model broken?', *The Age*, 3 March 2018, 3, noted that within one week Caltex abandoned its franchise model completely; Australian Retail Food Group, owner of Gloria Jean's and Brumby's Bakeries, announced closure of c. 200 outlets; and widespread wage fraud by Domino's franchisees was reported because head office took too much profit share. Cf. on beverage giant Chataime, Adele Ferguson, 'Bubble tea giant in \$6m pay scandal', *The Age*, 27 April 2019, 1, and Adele Ferguson, 'Bubble Trouble', 10-11 plus Editorial, 36, and Business Comment, 2, in the same issue.
  39. Pollard, *Tides*, 89, 150.
  40. Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1977).
  41. Malloch and Grem, 'ServiceMaster', 57.
  42. Pollard, *Soul*, 161, as told by Charles Pollard III.
  43. Pollard, *Soul*, 12-14. Seen by a shocked relative, Pollard was asked if everything was OK at home.
  44. Solomon, *Evangelical Christian Executives*, 71.
  45. Malloch and Grem, 'ServiceMaster', 56-57.
  46. Malloch and Grem, 'ServiceMaster', 57.
  47. Ashcroft et al., *Relational Lens*, Ch. 7.
  48. Malloch and Grem, 'ServiceMaster', 58. Cf. Miroslav Volf, *Work in the Spirit: Toward a Theology of Work* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 108, seeing vocation 'easily misused ideologically' by combining a high view of work with 'indifference to alienation', as if 'every employment is a place of service to God ... even soulless movement'. Pollard can sound like this, but broader personalist themes, technology to make work more humane, the connection between human souls and *The Soul of the Firm* encourage work reform. Volf (115) argues that only a gift-based view of work provides the impulse and energy to change poor work. For my defence of a more vigorous, critical notion of vocation, and by analogy in part, of service, as enabling critique of ideological misuses, see Gordon R. Preece, *The Viability of the Vocation Tradition in Trinitarian, Credal and Reformed Perspective* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1998), 72-75.
  49. Prabhu Guptara, 'Spirituality at Work: A Comparative Perspective', *Professorenforum Journal* 9, no. 1 (2008).
  50. Robert J. Banks and Bernice M. Leadbetter, *Reviewing Leadership: A Christian Evaluation of Current Approaches* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 110.
  51. Banks and Leadbetter, *Reviewing Leadership*, 111. See Edward C. Zaragoza, *No Longer Servants, but Friends: A Theology of Ordained Ministry* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), who seeks a new foundation of friendship, not servanthood or slavery, which has implications for non-ordained ministries also. This is contra to the notorious downsizer 'Chainsaw' Al Dunlap's motto, 'if you want a friend, get a dog'. Pollard, despite his powerful presence, nonetheless also exemplified a friendship style. The two styles are not opposites, despite the appearance of Jesus' telling his disciples 'You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants [or slaves] any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends because I have revealed to you everything that I have heard from my Father' (John 15:14-15). Jesus' foot-washing, symbolising his sacrificial death, is to be imitated (John 13:15-16), expressing agape love, empowered and revealed by his Spirit.
  52. Goldberg, *Against the Grain*, 193.
  53. Malloch and Grem, 'ServiceMaster', 49-50.
  54. As noted earlier, despite SM being largely Evangelical in its origins, Wade partnered with Robert Wenger, a Roman Catholic concerned to integrate his faith and work.
  55. Malloch and Grem, 'ServiceMaster', 59.
  56. 'Principles of Governance' (2013), C. William Pollard Papers 192, digitalcommons.spu.edu/pollard\_papers/192, 5ff.
  57. See Zygmunt Bauman, the doyen of European postmodern sociologists, on the liquidity of postmodern life, starting with *Liquid Modernity* (2000), then *Liquid Love* (2003), *Liquid Life* (2005) etc. (all Polity Press, Cambridge). On detraditionalisation or 'the loss of traditional memory' and the ability to pass it on, note the recent seminar, 'Christian Identity in a Detraditionalised Context', by Robyn Horner of the Australian Catholic University at Paradosis Conference on Knowing Self and God, Melbourne School of Theology, 17 May 2019.
  58. Pollard writes: 'The transition from Billy to Franklin occurred ... when I was ... chair ... of the executive committee. It was clear from Franklin's experience in leading Samaritan's Purse that he had executive leadership ability ... [and] ... from his serving on the BGEA Board and ... conversations with me that he was committed to evangelism and to the ministry and mission of the BGEA', 'Principles of Governance', 192, 5ff.
  59. See Michael Bird, 'Franklin Graham is Coming to Australia: Here's Why I Won't be Attending', abc.net.au/religion/, 23 July 2018. 'Graham generally put himself above partisan politics.... Unlike his father, however, Franklin Graham ... has not avoided political partisanship – ... even describe[ing] Trump in quasi-messianic terms, ... as a God-sent saviour to America' (see 'Billy Graham's son: God put Trump in office', usatoday.com/videos/news/, 4 May 2018). Further, Franklin has been morally selective in critiquing President Clinton's and not President Trump's abhorrent mistreatment of women. As Michael Bird notes, Franklin Graham wrote 'in the *Wall Street Journal* in 1998 that President Bill Clinton should consider resigning ... because of his affair with Monica Lewinski' and lying to his family, Congress and the U.S. public, but 'urged Christian voters to overlook' Trump's crude sexual remarks (see Bird, 'Franklin Graham'). As Pollard would agree, in biblical and Christian personalism (and feminism), 'the personal is political', or of public and institutional (business or State) significance'. A more irenic but still critical article is Barney Zwartz's, 'In his father's footsteps', *Sunday Age*, 10 February 2019, 26-27.
  60. For some paradoxes and complexities of this, see Darren E. Grem, *The Blessings of Business: How corporations shaped conservative Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).
  61. See Pollard, *Tides*, 130-132, regarding Pollard's eating humble pie after a cultural *faux pas*, and later giving a well-received

- Christian address at the Japanese CEO's funeral. On 171-172, also in Japan, Pollard maintained opportunity for not only Christian expression but for all faiths. There was also an adaptation for Buddhists from 'Honoring God' to 'Honoring Truth'.
62. In the Pollard Papers in Seattle Pacific University Library.
  63. Pollard to Nielsen email.
  64. Pollard to Nielsen email.
  65. Cf. Malloch and Grem, 'ServiceMaster', 56.
  66. Pollard to Nielsen email.
  67. Pollard to Nielsen email.
  68. Goldberg, *Against the Grain*, 194.
  69. C. William Pollard, *Serving Two Masters? Reflections on God and Profit* (Delta One Leadership Institute, 2012), cited on p.136.
  70. Pollard, *Serving Two Masters?* Ch. 30 and 136-137.
  71. Jim Haskett, Earl Sasser and Len Schlesinger, *The Service Profit Chain: How Leading Companies Link Profit and Growth to Loyalty, Satisfaction, and Value* (New York: Free Press, 1997). Cf. Pollard, *Soul*, 137-138.
  72. Pollard, *Soul*, 29.
  73. Pollard, *Soul*, 165.
  74. Bill Pollard, 'Foreword' to Adam Smith, *Excerpts from The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Washington, DC: The Trinity Forum, 2009).
  75. Pollard, 'Foreword', 4, but based on Smith's best-known classic *The Wealth of Nations*.
  76. Pollard, 'Foreword', 7.
  77. Pollard, 'Foreword', 7. Cf. However, he may have changed after Oxford in a more theistic direction. See Paul Oslington, ed. *Adam Smith as Theologian* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2011) and his 'God and the Market: Adam Smith's Invisible Hand', *Journal of Business Ethics* 108, no. 4 (2012), 429-438. Kenneth J. Barnes' balanced *Redeeming Capitalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), Ch. 4, cites Smith's theism in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Oxford: Bennet, 2008): 'the great society of all sentient and thinking beings whose immediate administrator and director is God himself' (125) and our heavenly goal is 'immediate converse and communication with God' (159). This would encourage the thoroughly theistic Pollard.
  78. Pollard, 'Foreword', 5.
  79. Pollard, 'Foreword', 7.
  80. Pollard, 'Foreword', 8.
  81. Pollard, 'Foreword', 10, citing 'A World Split Apart — Commencement Address Delivered At Harvard University', [orthodoxytoday.org](http://orthodoxytoday.org), 8 June 1978.
  82. Cf. C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947), quoted in Pollard, *Soul*, 53. And more fully in *The Heart of A Business Ethic* with introduction and afterword by C. William Pollard (Lanham: University Press of America, 2005), 17, summing up SM board member Lord Griffiths' use of Lewis's universal values and linking them to Drucker's chapter 'The Role of the Business Corporation as a Moral Community'.
  83. Ashcroft et al., *Relational Lens*, 55-56.
  84. Ashcroft et al., *Relational Lens*, 66, 69.
  85. Ashcroft et al., *Relational Lens*, 19.
  86. Pollard, *Soul*, 138-139, 141.
  87. Pollard, *Tides*, 191.
  88. Pollard, *Tides*, 207-208.
  89. Pollard, *Tides*, 190-191.
  90. Pollard, *Tides*, 208.
  91. Malloch and Grem, *Practical Wisdom*, 59. As Al Erisman, author of a forthcoming biography of Bill Pollard, mentioned to me, supported by my stumbling upon an SM franchise where 'Honoring God ...' still features.
  92. Pollard, *Tides*, 192.
  93. Malloch and Grem, *Practical Wisdom*, 53.
  94. Pollard admired Wheaton's longevity and continuity of only eight Presidents. 'This ... reflects a long history of God working through a Board ... earnestly seeking His will ....' But even Wheaton, despite its strong continuity and commonality of values, has not been without recent controversy through pluralistic pressures, particularly regarding homosexuality, related loss of public funding and challenges of religious pluralism.
  95. Pollard, *Tides*, 208-209.
  96. The 'blame' for SM's demise under Ward should not be laid at Pollard's feet as Chair and acting CEO with a largely independent board of Directors. Yet there may have been a tension between his entrepreneurial, innovative side and the Wheaton/Billy Graham Evangelical tradition on the one hand, and its model of rising through the ranks on the other.
  97. *Tides*, 210. Cf. James C. Collins and Jerry I. Porras, *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies* (New York: HarperBusiness, 1994). Ch. 8 'Home-Grown Management' sees internal selection based on in-house proven character and humble leadership serving a strong 'cult-like culture' as almost always better than selection of charismatic newcomers to impress the stock exchange.
  98. Pollard, *Tides*, 192.
  99. Pollard, *Tides*, 192.
  100. 'He [God] has made everything suitable for its time; moreover, he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet we cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end' (Ecclesiastes 3:11, cf. 12-15, NRSV). Compare James 4:13 (NRSV): 'Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a town and spend a year there, doing business and making money". Yet you do not even know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wishes, we will live and do this or that"'. Old saints who concluded letters with 'Deo voluntas' – God willing – wisely knew what they didn't know.
  101. Pollard, *Tides*, 192-194.
  102. Pollard, *Tides*, 217.
  103. Ashton et al., *The Relational Lens*, 26, citing the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Sustainable Reporting Guidelines, June 2000, 33.
  104. Grem, *Blessings of Business*, 89.
  105. New Brunswick: Transaction, 1993.
  106. Grem, *Blessings of Business*, 89. Cf. C. William Pollard, 'Various Notes Regarding Peter Drucker', August 2017, showing the personal importance of Drucker's mentoring.
  107. Well summarised in Pollard, *Tides*, 252-255. Cf. Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981).
  108. Pollard, *Tides*, 219.
  109. Pollard, *Tides*, 186-187.
  110. Pollard, *Tides*, 255.
  111. Pollard, *Tides*, 187-88.
  112. Cited without reference in Pollard, *Soul*, 13.
  113. Pollard, *Tides*, 243.
  114. Pollard, *Soul*, 119.
  115. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 191.
  116. This is best stated in P. Drucker, *The Practice of Management* (Oxford: Butterworth/Heinemann, 1954/2007). See D. McCann and M. Brownsberger, 'Management as a Social Practice: Rethinking Business Ethics After MacIntyre', in Max Stackhouse et al., *On Moral Business* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 508-513.
  117. Pollard, *Soul*, ch. 7.
  118. Pollard, *Soul*, 189.
  119. Pollard, *Soul*, 168-169, 137. Relativising profit growth at all costs, Pollard quoted Drucker again on not pushing too hard for growth when 'the stream's just not moving that fast' (170-171).
  120. Pollard, *Soul*, 155.
  121. See Gordon Preece, 'Re-Humanising Work: From Vocation to Precarious and Robotised Work', *Zadok Perspectives* 140 (Spring 2018), 1-6. Cf. "'We're not robots": Amazon employees protest across Europe on Black Friday (VIDEO)", [rt.com](http://rt.com), 23 November 2018. European Amazon workers protested and went on strike over poor and unsafe conditions, treatment like 'robots' and low wages.
  122. Ross Gittins, 'Productivity and Fairness Should Go Together', [rossgittins.com](http://rossgittins.com), 25 June 2016.
  123. Pollard reflects personalist language from John Paul II's *Laborem Exercens* (On Human Labor), 1981.
  124. See Charles Pollard III's Afterword on his father's joy in his employees' success stories (Pollard, *Soul*, 160-161). He notes that, 'with each acquisition, the deal and the negotiations gave my father great professional satisfaction, but it was the people involved who gave him a profound sense of joy .... He cares about

- the people he works with, not only because they contribute to the firm, but also ... to his life'. Bill Pollard had a profound sense of divine and human purpose, which he wanted for others also, but this sense of their destiny grew out of a profound sense of their human dignity as persons, related to by a personal God.
125. Pollard, *Tides*, 173-175.
  126. Lewis' and Pollard's negative comparison between immortals and nations/cultures etc. is more accurate regarding fallen nations and cultures. But institutional and technological apparatuses are part of the cultural mandate. Former Fuller President Richard Mouw once said in a class that, if we were in Eden and hadn't sinned, the population would still have grown along with increased cultural complexity requiring (if we'd had cars!) traffic lights, road rules etc.
  127. Even if Paul poses a negative comparison of this tent and the intermediate soul's life, not the naked intermediate life and the fullness of bodily resurrection, the primary focus is on bodily resurrection. Overwhelmingly, even if not exclusively, in Scripture, 'soul' is used of the whole person, not some spiritual part, as Pollard sometimes expresses as the distinctive element of humans. His moving account of Ken Hansen's last, almost clothe-less days (Pollard, *Tides*, 122-123) nonetheless seems similar (citing 2 Cor 5:1, 6, 8). We affirm the heavenly hope also, but in a more holistic, earthy way.
  128. See Pollard, *Tides*, 59, 79, 85, 90, 123, 158, 161.
  129. Cf. 'How Structures Can Strangle the Soul', Pollard, *Soul*, Ch. 8.
  130. Pollard, *Tides*, 192-194.
  131. Note especially 'spiritual dimension', Pollard, *Tides*, 36-39, 41, 100-101, 149, 253, 255.
  132. Cf. Pollard, *Soul*, 57: 'Our goal is not to find an alternative to people, but instead to grow people ... in their work. A person with both a clear direction and a purpose to serve provides an element of dependability and response greater than any machine'.
  133. Darrel Cosden, *The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), Tom Wright, *Surprised by Hope* (London, UK: SPCK, 2008), and Volf, *Work in the Spirit*, Ch. 4: 'Work, Spirit and New Creation', all stress relative continuity from this earth and heaven to the new heavens and new earth.
  134. C.S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce* (New York: Macmillan, 1946), 27-28.
  135. See Sean M. McDonough, *Creation and New Creation* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2016), 135, citing C.S. Lewis, *The Last Battle* (New York: Macmillan, 1956), 169-171.
  136. Chris R Armstrong, 'Down-to-Earth Faith: Work through the lens of C.S. Lewis's Medieval Incarnational Wisdom', Paper presented at the 2018 Faith and Work Summit in Chicago, 11-13 October 2018. Italics mine. Used with permission and gratitude.
  137. Pollard, *Soul*, 125.
  138. Pollard, *Soul*, Ch. 4: 'The Firm, the Family, and the Promises We Make', especially 61-64.
  139. Pollard, *Soul*, 167-168, cf. Pollard, *Tides*, 260-261 for Chip Pollard's informed view of the two-way nature of work and family flexibility as an alternative to idealistic work/life balance.
  140. The earlier story of John illustrates multiplexity as knowing someone across a variety of relational roles. John was driven to work by family members. This encouraged Pollard and SM's willingness to go the extra mile with him. See Pollard, *Tides*, 174. Cf. Ken Wessner's fatherly friendship with star SM worker Ron Kuykendall, pushing him to complete college (Pollard, *Soul*, 72-73).
  141. The respective titles of Pollard, *Soul*, Chs. 1 and 6.
  142. See Emmanuel Levinas, 'The Face of the Other' (selections from *Totality and Infinity*), [dbanach.com/Levinas/reading.htm](http://dbanach.com/Levinas/reading.htm), and cf. C.S. Lewis, *Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1956), where Lewis riffs from a Greek myth to show we need to develop our own faces to see God's face. Cf. 1 Cor 13:12 on finally seeing 'face to face' compared with 'in a glass darkly'.
  143. Pollard, *Tides*, 208-210.
  144. Pollard, *Tides*, 219.
  145. Pollard, *Soul*, 56-59.
  146. Pollard, *Soul*, 56-57.
  147. Pollard, *Soul*, 56-59. Similarly, Pollard argues that capitalism is 'morally neutral. It is indifferent to moral choices. It is materialistic and impersonal. It can result in great human blessings as well as great human misery'. See *Tides*, 149. This also is a fallacy. Indifference is amorality, not neutrality between good and evil, but efficiency and productivity effacing ethics as a consideration. From a Christian personalist perspective but with a stronger sense of the non-neutrality of technology as tools or hardware, see Jacques Ellul's famous Technology trilogy with its distinction between social software of technique and hardware of technology: *The Technological Society* (New York: Knopf, 1974); *The Technological System* (New York: Continuum, 1990); and *The Technological Bluff* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990). For an introduction see J. Ellul, 'A Little Debate about Technology', *Christian Century* 2 (7 June 1973).
  148. Jonathan Taplin's *Move Fast and Break Things: How Facebook, Google and Amazon have cornered culture and what it means for all of us* (London: MacMillan, 2017) is a fine insider account of this motto's destructive consequences.
  149. See Richard Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998). Cf. Gordon Preece, 'Editorial: Re-Humanising Work: from vocation to precarious and robotised work', *Zadok Perspectives* 140, Spring 2018, 1-6, for critique and theological resources to respond to Facebook, Amazon and co.



"Leaders are admired most when they exemplify strong character, depth of integrity, and a heart for others. This is the essence of my longtime friend Bill Pollard."

Foreword by **BILLY GRAHAM**

# The Tides of Life

*Learning to Lead and Serve as  
You Navigate the Currents of Life*

**C. WILLIAM POLLARD**

Author of the national best seller  
*The Soul of the Firm*

