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The ServiceMaster Company as a Model for BAM Startups

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The ServiceMaster Company has intrigued me since I attended a seminar offered by the company in the early 1990s. Management people like me were invited to learn principles which made this company so great. However it was only later that I learned from the CEO at that time, Bill Pollard, that “there are no Christian companies.” So, what was it that made it seem Christian?

I was privileged to continue my study of the company in 2021 and centered my research on a problem to be solved, “Is there a universal model or guide for pre-faith discipleship which will create an environment for people to seek God while working in a non-Christian startup?” Is there a unique *modus operandi* for profitability, creating value, and making disciples of Jesus?

Boeing executive, Al Erisman researched the ServiceMaster story and published his findings in the 2020 book, *The ServiceMaster Story*, thereby providing a strong case study of how faith and work can be connected successfully in the world of business. He clearly demonstrated how ‘purpose’ can bring meaning to the daily work of everyone in the company – from top level executives to janitors.

Certainly, the story of the ServiceMaster Company suggests something of intrinsic value, something interesting and unique; but a nagging question has continued to surface in my mind. Is this a replicable model - perhaps something to inform the international business startup world some call *Business as Mission*?

When Patricia Asp, long term ServiceMaster executive refers to their four tenets – “to honor God in all we do, to help people develop, to pursue excellence, and to grow profitably,” she states that she came to know these principles not only as a way of working, but also as a way of living. How did that happen? It seems that it may have something to do with Ken Wessner’s statement, “We need to help a person *be* before we help them *do*.”

It is the hypothesis of this short reflection upon the ServiceMaster Company, and particularly the articulation of Bill Pollard, that what the first five CEOs of ServiceMaster created was a praxis of redemptive methodologies which indeed did honor God by firstly promoting the dignity, worth and growth of each individual employee. Mr. Pollard suggests the reason behind the amazing growth and success of the company (it doubled in size every 3 ½ years from 1975-2000) is its commitment to the development of its people. As such this may be a model for other businesses worldwide.

The vibrant culture of the ServiceMaster environment is something clearly identifiable and potentially transferrable once key variables are understood, interpreted, and accounted for. It is within this context that one might hope for a model useful for business startups in different religious, cultural, economic, and political environments internationally.

The *Business as Mission* movement as we understand it today is little more than twenty years old, but the integration of faith and work is as old as the world itself. God was the first worker, creator and advocate of spiritual content connected to created value. In the centuries since the Garden of Eden, there are numerous examples of men and women who brought God into the marketplace of life. What the *Business as Mission* movement has done is reinvent the concept in our time with an anticipated end in view that men and women of all cultures, creeds, languages, and ethnicities will come to worship the true God and bring glory to Him. Gea Gort quotes a friend of hers, “Five hundred years ago we had a Reformation of dogma. Now we have a reformation of mission.”¹

A Unique Company: 1929-2000

From 1929 through 2000, five CEOs grew the company with a few people working from a home office to a \$6 billion publicly traded company working in at least 45 countries with over 200,000 people under management. But this was not the mythical company starting in a garage like Amazon or Hobby Lobby, or high tech like Microsoft or Facebook. According to Erisman, this unusual company “...created a career opportunity for those who did the work – beyond the job and a paycheck.”² This paper explores the meaning of that statement plus it initiates an extrapolation beyond the Service Master Company.

The writings and speeches of the 4th CEO, Bill Pollard, provide plenty of insightful evidence – evidence that is carved into a gigantic marble wall, but more importantly in the praxis of every employee and modeled by the leadership. There are just two end goals: to honor God in all we do; to help people develop.

What? No ‘profit’ goal? No shareholder value statement? No numeric metrics?

ServiceMaster certainly acknowledged the importance of profit, and its accompanying metrics, along with excellence, but as a means to the preferred end. The end goal is the growth and development of people, God’s way. The means is profit. In Pollard’s own words, “For us, the common link between God and profit is people.”³

Dozens of speeches and an entire book is devoted to the idea that “the soul of each person joining together with others become *The Soul of the Firm*.”⁴ And many oft-quoted expressions give evidence of what the leaders lived out every day in company life:

- Our task is to train, motivate and develop people – to be better and better
- The true worth of the enterprise rests in the brains of its employees
- The strength of a nation is not in its technology, nationalism, or materialism – it is in its workforce
- People work for a cause, not just a living; they want purpose and meaning in their work
- Humans are to be treated as the subject of work, not the object of work
- If you don’t live it, you don’t believe it
- We need to help a person *be* before we help that person *do*
- “I can’t leave God in the pew on Sunday – I have to bring Him with me to work on Monday. It is my ministry.” Marion Wade, the founder of ServiceMaster.
- The first objective leads to something everyone values: dignity, worth and potential of every person
- Values have to get to the behavioral level; an operational definition is needed
- Build on the ordinary and expect the extraordinary
- I want to have every person confronted with the question of God
- The workplace is not just where we get things done. It is also a place that can become a moral community for the development of human character – Tides 144
- We were becoming a community for the development of human character
- The global marketplace provides a wonderful opportunity for followers of Jesus Christ to live and share their faith
- My faith and the ethic of my life became a reality as I was able to serve those I led ... and a platform to share my faith
- Work is not primarily a thing one does to live, but the thing one lives to do
- People develop when they catch a vision and take responsibility for making it happen – Carlos Cantu
- When we are wrong or fail, we admit it. Truth cannot be compromised
- The results of our leadership will be measured beyond the workplace. The story will be told in the changed lives of people
- It is the whole person, not just a pair of hands, who comes to work every day, and it is the whole person God loves and in whom He sees His likeness reflected
- Management is “getting the right things done through others,” but what we are suggesting ...is that leaders and managers cannot stop there. We also must be concerned about what is happening to people in the process
- In seeking to serve, the truth of what I said could be measured by what I did. The integrity of my actions had to pass their scrutiny

These adages are representative of many more for which there was an operational strategy to practice what was preached. And that practice was anchored in the *Imago Dei* theology, meaning that every human represents God’s divine image as she or he has the value God intended with dignity and intrinsic worth; there are no exceptions. This is directly connected the Cultural Mandate meaning that man is to

be a worker as God was and is; and in every cultural institution such as a business, fulfill the *Missio Dei*, God's mission in the world.

Bill Pollard was not only strongly influenced by biblical principles but by people like Peter Drucker, Robert Fogel and the prior CEOs of ServiceMaster, Marion Wade, Ken Hansen, and Ken Wessner. It was Fogel, the Nobel Prize-winning economist who concluded that the biggest challenge of our day may be to address the void in our society which is the development of the character of people. Others concur, speaking of spiritual capital⁵ defined as the Godly values of honesty, hope, loyalty, trust, love, encouragement, serving others and much more.

The logic follows the belief that the free-market system is morally neutral; it can produce human misery and also great blessing. To produce the blessing requires a moral reference point such as suggested by sociologist James Hunter.

In his book on the conflicts in our society, Hunter has called it a time of cultural wars, where the most fundamental ideas about who we are and how we are to order our lives individually and together are now at odds. His conclusion is that the nub of the disagreement can be traced to a matter of ultimate moral authority. How do we determine whether something is good or bad, right or wrong, acceptable or unacceptable? He concludes that the division or gap in our society or in the world is growing. People living and working in the same community are, in fact, poles apart.⁶

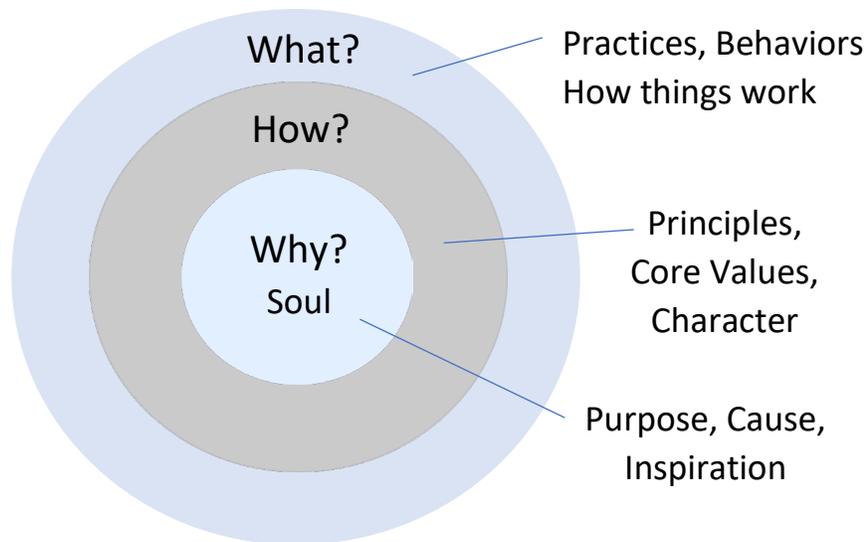
Pollard affirms, "...there is general agreement among most economists that the wealth creation formula of the future will be more dependent upon human capital than on the availability of land or reproducible material assets. This human capital factor is estimated to have a value twice as great as any physical resources."⁷

Pollard seems to propose that the company leadership start with the individual person, the company's soul, not with a relationship with Deity (which is the end). Perhaps an adaptation of the Golden Circle of Simon Sinek may help one understand the company at its peak of operation.

WHY: inner circle – Human soul representing purpose, cause, inspiration, reason for behaviors

HOW: middle circle – principles, core values, character, the special things

WHAT: outer circle - practices, behaviors, how things work



In short, the soul of the ServiceMaster Company was the human soul, and the first step was to “help every employee to *be* before we help that person *do*.” How did that take place? The “how” was articulated with a clear vision and strategy for developing character in those souls, which was in turn the observable “what” of measurable behaviors and practices. Even more concisely: core character principles were lived out in a common set of behaviors consistently practiced and were expected to result in the good fruit of a transformed individual soul.

Bill Pollard reflects on the reality that “...the most important asset of the firm is not recorded on our balance sheet but walks out the door every night. It is our people ... when profit becomes an end goal – as it can so easily do in business – we risk the loss of the soul of the firm. As Jesus reminds us, ‘For what will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and forfeit his life?’”⁸

Biblical basis for the ServiceMaster Ethos

Bill Pollard presents the question, “How then do I relate my faith to a diverse and pluralistic marketplace?”⁹ He suggests four options:

1. Do I redefine my faith to be more inclusive and tolerant and acceptable?
Water it down so as not to be offensive?
2. Or do I maintain the old separation between sacred and secular? Live a bifurcated life and accept the premise that religion and business just don’t mix, and keep my faith a very private matter.

3. Or do I use my leadership to promote and propagate or impose my faith?
4. Or do I seek to live and share my faith in such a way that it can be examined, tested by my colleagues, and fellow workers and yes even be embraced by some, all within the context of a community that works together to produce goods and services and generates profits.

While Mr. Pollard does not directly present supporting evidence for his choice of option #4 above, it is clear that to implement the mission to “honor God in all we do,” the codes, commandments, guidelines and principles of God’s word are the foundational data. These include such-well known documents as the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, the Lord’s Prayer, the Golden Rule, and the Parables.

These Biblical documents present values and standards such as living out the image of God, respect for others, dignity of the soul, honoring all people. To accomplish the result intended by God since creation, such ends are guided by key values such as love, humility, self-control, righteous living, mercy, peacemaking, compassion, servant living, excellence and forgiveness.

Erisman points out that to get to key existential questions, Jesus used questions extensively and then tended to probe beyond the stated response. For example, in the story of the Samaritan woman in John 4 after an extensive conversation about water and her personal life, there develops sufficient context for Jesus to surface questions of true worship and the living water, truth and salvation.

In John 5 Jesus approached a man who had been infirm for 38 years. The man requested help in getting to the healing pool but lamented that there was no one to help him. But Jesus healed him instead. Again, the story ends with Jesus telling him to stop sinning, because what he really needed was healing and subsequent salvation and a new path for following Jesus. Through his ministry Jesus began with the present need and used it to conclude with matters of eternal importance (healing the sick in MT 4, the leper in MT 8, the demon-possessed man and calming of the storm in MT 8, the paralytic in MT 9, healing of the daughter and feeding the four thousand in MT 15.) Similar events throughout the rest of the gospel narrative demonstrate the principle followed by Pollard and the ServiceMaster Company – start with the human condition and serve. In discussing queries as to why the company has the two goals of honoring God and developing its people, he often responded as in a speech in Phoenix,

But regardless of where you are with respect to this objective, the principle that can be embraced by all is where it leads us and that is the dignity, worth and potential of every person. For us this is fundamental to the understanding of service and a service culture. As we seek to apply this principle to the work environment, it requires the linking of the task and the performance of a task with the development of the person performing the task. Management is not just getting the right things done through others. It also involves what is happening to the person in the process¹⁰.

Eleven years after the Phoenix speech and well into retirement, Pollard affirmed at the Second Faith at Work Summit in 2016:

“...we also tried to encourage an environment of the workplace being an open community where questions about the existence of God, about a person’s moral and spiritual development, and how one related the claims of their faith with their work were issues of discussion, debate, learning and understanding. We considered the people of our firm as the soul of the firm and there was an open door for the love of Jesus Christ to work in the lives of our people.”¹¹

So with *Imago Dei* (and the value of the person with dignity and worth) as the beginning point, the standards in both the Old and New Testaments and the model of Jesus, the ServiceMaster Company set about to live truth as a pathway to speaking truth. “The leaders drew on their own Christian faith to make this the anchor of the right way to do business, while not imposing that foundational belief on others ... I want to have every person confronted with the question of God. They must decide how to answer that question.”¹²

I conclude this section the way Erisman concludes his valuable work, with a quote from Patricia Asp, “The ServiceMaster objectives were not only a way of working, but a way of living. When I left, I took the objectives with me, and they remain...”¹³

ServiceMaster as a Model for BAM companies

This brief survey of the 70-year ServiceMaster success creates the basis for a proposed model which could anchor the methodology of any company with similar goals and anticipated end results. *Business as Mission* is a term with various articulations and no universally agreed upon definition but most common and robust is that of the www.businessasmission.com website and is the working definition of BAM Global.

Business as Mission is:

- Profitable and sustainable businesses;
- Intentional about Kingdom of God purpose and impact on people and nations;
- Focused on holistic transformation and the multiple bottom lines of economic, social, environmental and spiritual outcomes;
- Concerned about the world’s poorest and least evangelized peoples.

Pollard affirmed the perspective of Fogel that business today lacks a fair distribution of spiritual resources, assets, and capital. The BAM community believes that the primary means by which God and

the gospel can be holistically displayed is the workplace. “The unity of *Imago Dei* and *Missio Dei* in our work reveals that there is truly no dichotomy between spiritual and secular.”¹⁴ While BAM practitioners affirm the definition above and the incumbent process, many do not have the tools or clear understanding of how integration takes place.

One would be remiss in failing to acknowledge the important contribution to this subject by the various members of the Faith and Work movement. Os Hillman has surveyed the development beginning with the Gospel of Salvation (evangelism) era of 1930-1977 to include the CBMC, FGBMFI, and FCCI; followed by the Gospel of the Kingdom (discipleship) era of C12, ICCC and others in the 1980s; followed by the Social Transformation era beginning in the 1990s represented by Ed Silvoso, Henry Blackaby, Bob Buford, and the Marketplace Leaders group. Most recently the monumental contribution of the Theology of Work Project led by Al Erisman, Andy Mills, Katherine Alsdorf and others has produced the valuable biblical commentary on the subject.

David W. Miller suggests that the Faith at Work (FAW) movement is organized around a quest for integration and is not necessarily monolithic or homogenous. He proposes a typology which he calls the Integration Box which at the stage of his description is more of a suggested framework for analysis and academic research.

ET: Ethics	EX: Experience
EV: Evangelism	EN: Enrichment

Miller’s Integration Box: The Four E’s

The quest for an organizing principle manifests itself in the Four E's grid which Miller suggests are valid expressions of the integration of faith and work and to be outside the box is to believe that faith and work cannot be integrated.¹⁵ The Four Es are Ethics, Evangelism, Experience, and Enrichment.

In short, the Ethics Type emphasizes what is discernable right action and ethical behavior in the marketplace. The Evangelism Type represents those whose primary mode of integration is through evangelization, i.e. living out the Great Commission. The Experience Type focuses on questions of vocation, calling, meaning and purpose which focus on what they do in business as real ministry. Finally the Enrichment Type focuses on issues like healing, prayer, meditation, transformation, etc. Miller recognizes that all typologies have their limitations and strengths, and the substantive nature of the Integration Box is that it provides an entry point for the integration of faith and work. What follows here is one of those entry points.

The Impact Foundation declares their support of redemptive methodologies with "every business we invest in is part of God's redemptive work in the world – bringing the reality of the Kingdom into closer focus. Our endgame is for our venture to be an agent of redemption as we act as the hands and feet of Christ in the world, knowing that He is making all things new. Businesses built by these kinds of entrepreneurs live out the Gospel through business practices."¹⁶

From this study of the ServiceMaster Company it is possible to attempt a long-term set of beginning best practices for a BAM startup. These common set of behaviors if practiced consistently and regularly over time can be expected to result in fruit aligned with the above BAM definition. It is important that entrepreneurs realize that this will not happen overnight and can be expected to take 5-8 years to see measurable results.

Employee growth and development	Biblical Value (not revealed initially to employees, but a motivation for management)	Plan of Action
Promote increased dignity, self-worth, and a sense of purpose	"Adorn yourself with dignity" – Lev. 19:32; "Strength and dignity are her clothing" Prov. 31:25	Each manager is considered a spiritual leader; provide training, retreats, workshops, and educational programs for every person; opportunities for

		upward mobility; listen to all grievances
Discover natural God-given talents, gifts, abilities, and “calling”	“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others” I Peter 4:10	Administer testing instrument and provide counsel by skilled work-place professional resource personnel; study Os Guinness on ‘calling’
Facilitate an integrated personal, familial, and corporate integrity	“For the Lord your God detests anyone who...deals dishonestly” Deut. 25:16; “Do not deceive one another.” Lev. 19:11	Initiate a corporate chaplain service; make clear a simple (to start with) behavioral set of standards and require adherence. Be consistent and teach why.
Teach each employee standards of respect, fairness, and consideration to one another	“Show proper respect to everyone.” I Peter 2:17; “Be peaceable and considerate.” Titus 3:2; “You shall not take vengeance...” Lev. 19:18; “...he that repeats a matter separates friends.” Prov 17:9 and the Golden rule	Management will model this among themselves and with all employees; rewards can be given for exemplary acts of integrity; gossip is discouraged and condemned; respect and love are consistently applied.
Promote the most excellent workmanship	“...the fire will test the quality of each man’s work ... he will receive his reward...” I Cor. 3:13 “Whatever you do, do it with all your heart...” Col 3:23	Incentives for excellence in each job role; conduct regular, fair, and positive performance reviews; provide feedback all year long.
Family growth and development	“Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.” Col. 3:19; “children, obey your parents...” Eph. 6: 1-3	Marriage enrichment seminars; chaplain service; grants for children’s education
Forgiveness	“Forgive one another...” Col. 3:13; “Be kind to one another, forgiving one another...” Eph 4: 31-32	Leaders should model forgiveness and do so publicly; tell stories of forgiveness being modelled in the culture
Humility	“The reward for humility is riches, honor and life.” Prov. 22:4; “...with all humility and gentleness.” Eph 4:2; “...with the humble is wisdom.” Prov 11:2	Study and practice Collins’ Level 5 leadership; boost morale of individuals and teams, not yourself; get “down and dirty” with employees

<p>Servanthood toward one another and eventually in servant leadership</p>	<p>“Use your freedom ... to serve one another” Gal 5:13; “...received a gift ... use it to serve one another.” I Peter 4:10; “the greatest among you shall be your servant.” MT 23:11</p>	<p>Leaders go to the end of the line; listen at all times; be open and vulnerable about company vision and team play etc.; leading by walking around; daily think about how to be a servant. In short LEAD BY EXAMPLE</p>
<p>Determine and publish a corporate standard-bearing set of values or goals</p>	<p>“Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.” Prov 16:3; “The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance.” Proverbs 21:5</p>	<p>When a clear goal such as “help people develop” is well known and understood, managers must be accountable for doing it. Remind staff of the goal and demonstrate how everyone is progressing.</p>

We began with a problem to be solved, a hypothesis and a proposed model. Perhaps one question remains; are there no BAM companies which have similarities to ServiceMaster and may provide a model for newcomers to follow?

Hamara Feeds is an agricultural juggernaut in the poorest country in Africa, Zimbabwe. What started as a childhood chicken project has developed into a program of servicing 10,000 farmers with chicken stock and 400 tons of feed a week. But poultry was just the beginning for siblings Peter and Renee Cunningham as they realized the importance of the whole family, primary education, and agricultural training. Their vision – lifting the country out of poverty in the name of Jesus. The company owns schools, and an agriculture college for animal and plant husbandry. They partner with churches to serve the whole family with jobs, food, and personal development. Faith and work are integrated in tangible ways evidenced by miracles, educated young people and church-workplace coordination.

B Company When I met Rick, he was managing a leather factory in China. During a tour of the factory floor, he mentioned that “Every day is an opportunity for making disciples”. I asked, “how so? Can you give an example?” He responded by telling us that the week prior there was a heated dispute between two managers. He was called and he handled it in a non-traditional way for China, but in a biblical way. When things calmed down and the production lines normalized, one of the foreman asked about this very different way of handling things. It was an open door to share his faith.

PhotoUp is an imaging company in the Philippines. Over a six-year period PhotoUp grew from just a handful of employees to about 300. One of the primary reasons for this growth is their commitment to their people. PhotoUp's ability to integrate employee development programs into the culture of the organization has allowed for vertical growth for many of the employees.

As an example, one individual was selling candy on the street when the organization brought her on board in a minimum wage position. Her life began to change in every way. She is now in charge of custodial services and is the primary breadwinner in her family. Not only has the company changed her life but it has had a significant impact on her family as well.

ITJ is a software company in India. A mid-level manager named George had used his leadership position inappropriately. But top management saw this as an opportunity to help him learn how to change if he was willing to learn and do an about face. Company owners knew they needed to remain consistent in following company guidelines, but George agreed to be on probation for three months while they worked with him and taught him how to lead appropriately. In the process, he learned the difference between penance and repentance, and he agreed that he wanted to learn. All middle management (all non-Jesus followers) worked together in the learning process, and at the end of three months, George was a changed man and clearly understood the gospel; they concluded the time with the reading of Psalm 51. All this, because ITJ leadership had created a culture of living out their faith in every aspect of the business with a focus on the worker and God's redemptive grace.

Mike, the owner was quick to recognize that he too makes mistakes and as he and his partner Jason humbly ask forgiveness and as the employees observe that, it becomes an amazing learning experience for all. The proof that the employees are "getting it" is that they themselves are starting to put into daily practice biblical principles found in the scriptures.

Outland Denim in Cambodia is not like your everyday assembly line factory or sweat shop but is designed to benefit the employees in the daily operations and over the long haul. Owner James says, "Unlike conventional production facilities, our staff are trained in 20 skills across the cutting, finishing, and stitching departments. Our method of recording each staff member's progress involves scoring on a 0-5 scale, with a five indicating that the individual has achieved expertise in that skill. By December 2018, 69.5% of our new employees were undergoing training in more than one area of production, with 70.8% of new employees already progressing above a level 2 in at least one area of their training areas."

It was clear that lives are being changed – socially, economically, and spiritually. James reflects on one lady who had benefited with the job and the unique training in every aspect of the jean-making process and how she had set up another lady on the street in her own micro-business as a tailor.

Tims Bakery in Viet Nam has hired employees from the care agencies which have rescued victims of human slavery, giving them a safe work environment and a chance to learn a skill and develop real dignity. Both for this endeavor, as with hiring deaf and other disabled people, they relied on a philosophy based on the dignity of all people that when given a chance can rise to the occasion of healthy living. This is in contrast to the perspective of finding the best qualified people and hiring them. Instead Tims has prepared its managers for the high and satisfying goal of helping disadvantaged people develop. Ken Wessner when CEO of ServiceMaster said the same thing this way: “Our responsibility ... is to stir up the gift, the abilities, of each individual so each person becomes fully developed and mature for making his or her contribution to the winning team and then goes on to being a leader on his own team.”¹⁷

Even though the practical action steps described above are the most important in understanding a real profit-making, job-creating business which serves people and makes disciples of Jesus, I couldn't help but ask, “What does this look like in written form.” Stan had an easy answer but reminded me that the real test is the way it works in personal transformed lives. He says, “The foundation for everything Tims does is based on biblical principles and there are three main ways Tims achieves its mission.”

CHARACTER Tims is built on biblical principles which include: upholding all laws to the best of our ability (Romans 13:1-7), making ethical and moral decisions (Deuteronomy 25:13-15), supporting the needs of our clients (Proverbs 3:27), and appropriately handling money and wealth (Proverbs 28:6).

CRAFTSMANSHIP Tims views its employees and vendors as its greatest resource and treats them accordingly by providing excellent compensation, practicing fair trade, and providing a safe and flexible working environment (Matthew 22:39). This is intended to create an environment in which each of our employees can achieve excellence in their craft, and ultimately, serve our customers well with high quality product and customer service (Exodus 31:3).

CONNECTION Tims actively pursues opportunities to connect with the community in which it operates. This includes understanding the language and values of the people in our community as well as participating in donations, sponsorships, and networking (Matthew 5:16). Tims also seeks to provide opportunities for employment to those who are disabled or disadvantaged so that they can have a sustainable means of self-sufficiency (Philippians 2:4).

These examples of post-revenue BAM companies with strong evidence of a Quadruple Bottom Line (Profitability, Job Creation, Disciple-making and Creation Care) standard of operation are representative

of companies which model a cross-cultural similarity to the ServiceMaster Company. They, however, are few and scattered around the world and with great diversity of industry. Perhaps their journey and commitment along with that of ServiceMaster will encourage others to strive for excellence, service to the employee and honoring God in all things, all the while making a profit.

In Conclusion

Although my understanding of the ServiceMaster Company 1929-2000 is still very limited, what I have learned has stimulated me to attempt to apply the principles and praxis of five key leaders into the beginning of a “best practice” for BAM companies desirous of an integration of faith and work which will change lives.

The redemptive methodologies of ServiceMaster started with Jesus’ “people first” approach, which begs the question of the real need - which for Bill Pollard was the question of God. In a BAM country in Asia it might be the question of who Jesus is; or perhaps the relevance of faith. It is hoped that this beginning will help address the problem posed at the beginning, the problem of a universal model emerging from the ServiceMaster story.

Pollard queries the source of moral authority and in so doing suggests a moral standard for the ethos of the business firm, a community for the development of human character, a place to find purpose and meaning. He concurs with others that the economic potential of the future has more to do with human capital than any other resource or source of capital and develops a useful summary of Jesus’ teaching on money and wealth, God, profit, principles, the moral hazard, and the business application. From such Biblical apologetic, he calls the reader to understand business as an explicitly moral undertaking.¹⁸ If true for Jesus and for first century Christendom and for a 20th century multinational company, can it be true for 21st century startups around the world?

End Notes

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- 2 Erisman, Albert M. (2020). *The ServiceMaster Story: Navigating Tension between People and Profit*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, p. 1.
- 3 Pollard, C. William. (1996). *The Soul of the Firm*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Regal Books, p. 20
- 4 Pollard, C. William. (1996). *The Soul of the Firm*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Regal Books, p. 23
- 5 Eldred, Ken. (2005). *God is at Work: Transforming People and Nations Through Business*. Ventura, California: Regal Books, p. 96ff.
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- 15 Miller, David W. (2007). *God at Work: The History and Promise of the Faith at Work Movement*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, p. 127.
- 16 <https://www.impactfoundation.org/blog/best-practices-in-redemptive-methodology>
- 17 Erisman, Albert M. (2020). *The ServiceMaster Story: Navigating Tension between People and Profit*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, p. 87.
- 18 Pollard, C. William. (2014). *The Tides of Life: Learning to Lead and Serve as You Navigate the Currents of Life*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, p. 154ff.
- 19 Much more can be said of the struggles and success of ServiceMaster in other areas not treated here. These also deserve further study and an application to BAM companies – servant leadership, commitment to serving community needs, understanding of and adapting to culture, maintaining an environment for innovation and change among other topics.