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Speech at Second Faith at Work Summit

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Video for Second Faith@Work Summit

Dallas, Texas

October 27-28, 2016

Hello friends. I am sorry that I could not be with you at this second Faith At Work Summit. I am so grateful to the leadership of the Summit in organizing this event and I want to especially thank our host, Bill Peel.

It has been a blessing to me to see the growing interest in this subject of Faith at Work.

When I came into the workplace in the 1960's there was little or no organized effort encouraging Christians to integrate their faith with their work. For many of us, it was a time of two different worlds, church on Sunday and work on Monday.

It wasn't until more than 10 years later when I joined the ServiceMaster team that I was introduced to the joy and responsibility of

integrating my faith with my work. In so doing I learned to view my work as a calling of God, yes, even a ministry to the people I would work with and to the customers we served. It forced me to wrestle with the question of the relationship between God and profit.

In my management and leadership role I was challenged to assume the responsibility for the growth of our people, not only in the job they were doing but also in who they were becoming.

At the time I joined ServiceMaster, it was a service company with \$230 million in revenue. Our corporate objectives were: To Honor God in All We Do, To Help People Develop, To Pursue Excellence and to Grow Profitably. Those first two objectives were end goals, the second two were means goals. The first objective was not a basis of exclusion; instead it was the reason for our promotion of diversity as we recognized that different people with different beliefs were all part of the world that God and his son Jesus Christ so loved.

When I retired as CEO of the company a little over 25 years later, we had the same objectives but our business had now grown to over \$7 billion in revenue as we were serving with over 200,000 people we managed and some of whom were in our direct employ serving not only in the United States but also in 45 foreign countries.

I wish there was time to tell you some of the stories of how God worked in the lives of people all over the world as there was an environment of an open door for faith to come to work on Monday morning.

As a business firm we wanted to excel in generating profits and creating value for our shareholders. If we didn't want to play by these rules, we didn't belong in the ball game. But 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.

This did not mean that everything was done right. We made our share of mistakes. We sometimes failed and did things wrong. But because of a stated standard and a reason for that standard, we could not hide our mistakes. Mistakes were regularly flushed out into the open for correction and in some cases for forgiveness. Leaders could not protect themselves at the expense of those they were leading.

Five years after I retired, ServiceMaster was sold to a private equity firm that did not relate to all of these objectives and they were removed from the mission statement of the firm. This action reminded me of the reality that business firms are not eternal. It is only people who are eternal and will live forever, either in the joy of knowing God or in the bitter absence of that joy.

I want to thank you for the way you have honored me this day but in so doing I also want to recognize the people who invested in my life as I

sought to integrate my faith with my work including my predecessors at ServiceMaster -- Ken Hanson and Ken Wessner, my friend and adviser Peter Drucker, and the faithful witness of another friend, Billy Graham, who encouraged me in sharing my faith.

As you listen and learn during this second summit of Faith At Work, I trust you will be inspired to renew your efforts of bringing God with you when you come to work on Monday.

Thank you.

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