

## Article

# Evangelical and Catholic Timespace in Work: An Argument against a Homeless Eschatology

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**Abstract:** This article engages with how religion and economy relate to each other in faith-based businesses. It also elaborates on a recurrent idea in theological literature that reflections on different visions of time can advance theological analyses of the relationship between Christianity and capitalism. More specifically, this article brings results from an ethnographic study of two faith-based businesses into conversation with the ethicist Luke Bretherton's presentation of different understandings of the relationship between Christianity and capitalism. Using Theodore Schatzki's theory of timespace, the article examines how time and space are constituted in two small faith-based businesses that are part of the two networks Business as Mission (evangelical) and Economy of Communion (catholic) and how the different timespaces affect the religious-economic configurations in the two cases and with what moral implications. The overall findings suggest that the timespace in the Catholic business was characterized by struggling caused by a tension between certain ideals on how religion and economy should relate to each other on the one hand and how the practice evolved on the other hand. Furthermore, the timespace in the evangelical business was characterized by confidence, caused by the business having a rather distinct and achievable goal when it came to how they wanted to be different and how religion should relate to economy. There are, however, nuances and important resemblances between the cases that cannot be explained by the businesses' confessional and theological affiliations. Rather, there seems to be something about the phenomenon of tension-filled and confident faith-based businesses that causes a drive in the practices towards the common good. After mapping the results of the empirical study, I discuss some contributions that I argue this study brings to Bretherton's presentation of the relationship between Christianity and capitalism.

**Keywords:** timespace; practice theory; Theodore Schatzki; Luke Bretherton; business as mission; economy of communion; Ethnography; Christian ethics



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## 1. Introduction

How is one to understand the relationship between religion and capitalism? One recurrent approach among theologians and theological ethicists is to use time<sup>1</sup> as a central theme when analyzing this relationship. As an example, time ordered by capitalism can be described as making people prisoners in the present without any possibilities to imagine a different future (Tanner 2019). Further, *chronological* time is often contrasted with the *kairotic* time that the Christ event represents. As an example, Luke Bretherton argues that capitalism is the idolatry of chronological time as it makes buying and selling time a requirement to live. Bretherton, therefore, argues for a reclamation of time and space and the need for kairotic time to break into capitalist time structures (Bretherton 2019).

Building upon, but also complementing previous theological–ethical reflections on time and capitalism, this article asks a more specific question, namely how an ethnographic

<sup>1</sup> Time is a central theme in academia in general when discussing life under capitalism. See, e.g., James Carey's classical work on how the state and corporate capitalism used the regulation, synchronization, and standardization of time to extend their control over the citizens' everyday life. (Carey 1989).

study of two faith-based businesses might contribute to theological–ethical perspectives on the relationship between Christianity and capitalism. To avoid abstract analyses of religion and economy, or what constitutes good or bad action, there is, I argue, a need to focus on concrete issues and how Christianity and economy intermingle and diverge in social practices. The article thereby aligns with a growing field of interdisciplinary research that argues for the importance of examining how time is produced, altered, and disrupted in practices and with what political, emotional, and ethical implications (Shove et al. 2009, pp. 4–5). Hence, this article empirically examines how time is constituted in two small faith-based businesses that are part of the two networks: the Catholic Economy of Communion (EoC) and the evangelical Business as Mission (BAM).

In this article, the focus on time becomes a way to empirically study how religion and economy relate to each other in social practices. To open up the empirical material, I turn to Theodor Schatzki and his theory of *timespace activity* (Schatzki 2010). According to Schatzki, time is intertwined with space in practices. Hence, I will not (primarily) study objective time and space but how time and space are enacted and stretched out in daily practices. Schatzki further argues that practices are characterized by a *teleoaffective structure*, meaning that practices have a certain teleos as well as an emotional drive. People participating in practices are thereby acting to achieve a particular goal as well as acting to obtain something meaningful, something that is sought for (Schatzki 2010, p. 172). Using Schatzki as a theoretical conversation partner, this article examines how religion and economy intermingle and diverge in Christian business practices and how the different timespaces affect this intermingling and with what moral implications. Furthermore, while drawing on Luke Bretherton’s account of the mutual imbrication of Christianity and capitalism, this article aims to add a further specification of his overall position through the empirical study of different timespaces in Christian businesses. I will argue that theological reflections on time need to relate to space and human activity, or they will easily end up in abstractions.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. First, I discuss different approaches in the theological literature to the relationship between Christianity and capitalism. This is followed by a section on the theoretical framework, research strategy, and methods. I then briefly provide the background and context of the empirical study, which is presented in two parts. After that follows a discussion of the findings.

## 2. Theological Responses to Capitalism

There are numerous approaches to, and descriptions of, the relationship between Christianity and capitalism in the recent theological literature. In *Christ and the Common Life*, Luke Bretherton highlights six different responses to capitalism from political theologies of various positions (Bretherton 2019, pp. 350–51). In what follows, I will present three approaches that are relevant for the scope of this article.<sup>2</sup>

First, some scholars view Christianity as “sitting within” capitalism, a position that can lead to both “accommodation” as well as attempts to change it from the inside out.<sup>3</sup> One could argue that one example of this position is the so-called “Faith and Work Movement”, where religion is described as having a positive effect on corporate ethics as well as leadership when brought into the world of business (Miller 2007; Ewest 2018). Glennon and Lloyd, however, argue that “faith” in this context is mainly understood in secular terms and as something individual, thereby neglecting questions about businesses’ broader ethical responsibilities in relation to capitalism, such as facilitating low-paid labor (Glennon and Lloyd 2017, p. 220).

<sup>2</sup> While using Bretherton’s categories, I will also add to them literature that is relevant for the article.

<sup>3</sup> This approach is different from, for example, Latin liberation theologies that present Christianity and capitalism as being in opposition to each other (Bretherton 2019, p. 350).

Second, in the tradition of Max Weber,<sup>4</sup> another approach sees capitalism almost as a product of Christianity. Here, Bretherton gives an example of how Michael Novak argues that capitalism, more or less, can be seen as an expression of Christian values (Novak 1982). Kathryn Tanner, in contrast, reverses the Weber thesis and argues that Christianity bears the potential to undermine rather than support capitalism (Tanner 2019). Further, Tanner structures her theological critique of capitalism around different visions of time. She argues that in the ethics of “the new spirit of capitalism”,<sup>5</sup> the past, the present, and the future all collapse into one, making it almost impossible to break free from the present and to imagine a different future outside of the present capitalist arrangements (Tanner 2019, p. 30). Christianity, on the contrary, argues Tanner, “is a religion of radical time discontinuity, promoting thereby expectations of radically disruptive transformation” (Tanner 2019, p. 31). Even though Tanner’s theological critique of capitalism is well informed and thought-provoking, it leans towards a dichotomous way of talking about time. Moreover, as I have discussed elsewhere, Tanner’s way of creating ideal types, and not contextualizing her analysis, places her study far away from the messy empirical reality of the relationship between Christianity and capitalism in different social practices (Ledstam and Afdal 2020).

Third, relating to the Weberian position, another approach sees capitalism and Christianity as “mutually imbricated in each other”. This is also where Bretherton’s own work can be placed.<sup>6</sup> Bretherton describes this approach as opening up for both resistance to and abolitions of some parts of capitalism as well as reforms of others. It is important for Bretherton, however, to state that capitalism is not just one thing but should instead be understood as a “domineering power” that takes multiple forms, some better and some worse. Capitalism, therefore, is not all-determining. That, he argues, would claim too much on its behalf (Bretherton 2019, p. 351).<sup>7</sup>

#### *Luke Bretherton’s Conceptual Framework*

Bretherton is a leading theological ethicist who argues for the relevance of empirical research for ethics and moral philosophy. As an example, his book *Resurrecting Democracy* was developed out of a four-year-long ethnographic study examining in detail religious reconstructions of urban spaces through democratic politics (Bretherton 2015). However, what is a bit surprising is that *Christ and the Common Life*—his big book on political theology—includes few empirical examples, and the use of ethnographic studies is thin.<sup>8</sup> In this article, I will argue that Bretherton’s political theology would gain from including complementary ethnographic studies on the relationship between religion and economy in Christian practices. To make a specific argument, I will now give an example of what his writings on economy look like in the case studies on Catholic as well as Pentecostal Christianity.

Bretherton presents five case studies to show how Christians “make sense of politics today”, with the relationship between Christianity and economy as a crucial one.<sup>9</sup> For this article, the case studies on Catholic social teaching (CST) and Pentecostal political theology are of particular interest because of the connection between these case studies

<sup>4</sup> A vocational perspective on work, in combination with the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, was, according to Weber, a strong motivational force for capitalist efforts. The belief in predestination did not lead to passivity but to a quest for signs saying you were among the chosen. Economic success was one such sign that could prove your eternal salvation. The Weber thesis argues so to speak for a convergence between ascetic Protestantism—especially Calvinism—and the emergence of modern capitalism (Weber 2001). The thesis is much debated, however, and empirical studies show that it has survived with weak causality and with Protestantism as one of several factors behind early capitalism. See, e.g., (Zafirovski 2016).

<sup>5</sup> Tanner draws many of her descriptions of how capitalism “works” from (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005).

<sup>6</sup> Related to this approach is the growing interdisciplinary field often called “economic theology” that looks into how Christianity and economics historically have been, and are today, interrelated. For an introduction to this field, see (Schwarzkopf 2020).

<sup>7</sup> This article studies how religion and economy relate to each other in faith-based companies. Along these lines, several historical studies have examined the relationship between Evangelical Protestantism and the rise of commodity culture (Kirk 2018), and the “Christian Free Enterprise” (Moreton 2009), as well as the “complementarity”, “parity” and “symmetry” between religious and business life in America (Porterfield et al. 2017).

<sup>8</sup> Arne Rasmusson is making a similar comment about the scarce use of ethnographic studies in *Christ and the Common Life*. See (Rasmusson 2020).

<sup>9</sup> The five case studies are Humanitarianism, Black Power, Pentecostalism, Catholic Social Teaching, and Anglicanism.

and the empirical material.<sup>10</sup> The chapter on CST focuses on the relationship between democracy and Catholic Social teaching. More specifically, Bretherton discusses different theological dimensions of CST and gives a historical overview of how democracy became the normative political form advocated by the magisterium. In his examination of the development of CST, Bretherton discusses five different theological dimensions where “the importance of labor” is one of them. In a brief examination of the dignity of labor, Bretherton draws primarily on John Paul II’s encyclical *Laborem Exercens* from 1981 (John Paul II 1981), which states that work is constitutive of personhood and that work—whether in the home, the factory, or the office—is the primary means through which to practice one’s vocation and giftedness.

Contrary to the chapter on CST, the presentation of Pentecostal/charismatic political theology includes some empirical material, which is not surprising since, as Bretherton puts it, the Pentecostal movement lacks “a clear canon as well as identifiable key thinkers and institutional expressions and sociopolitical forms”. This means that Bretherton is pointing to tendencies and patterns within Pentecostal political theology rather than a stable set of commitments (Bretherton 2019, p. 121). To put it differently, the lack of a clear theological canon seems to guide his methodological choice to make this chapter a little bit more “context-sensitive”.<sup>11</sup>

Bretherton writes about Pentecostal time and space in relation to capitalism. Here, hardly any empirical material is consulted. Instead of showing how Pentecostals make sense of Christianity and capitalism in time and space, he comes up with a “theologically plausible” account of what is going on (Bretherton 2019, pp. 148–49). Bretherton contrasts chronological time with the kairotic time that the Christ event represents. While chronological time is linear, regular, and measurable and inevitably leads to death, kairotic time is “like a moment of inhalation”; it is life-giving and opens chronological time to eternal life and a different future. Hence, we can experience two times in the same place. Capitalism, Bretherton argues, is the idolatry of chronological time as it makes buying and selling time a requirement to live. What is needed in response, argues Bretherton, is a reclamation of time and space and a reopening to an eschatological horizon. For this to happen, kairotic time needs to break in within capitalist time structures. Bretherton also argues that Pentecostalism, at its best, witnesses to kairotic time (Bretherton 2019, p. 156).

Bretherton further argues that, given the symbiotic relationship between experiences of time and space, one must attend to how a Christian view of time also reconfigures a sense of place. A theological view of place, he argues, is hallowed not by sacred geography but by its participation in a certain time—the Christ event (Bretherton 2019, p. 154).

Bretherton’s conceptual construction of time and space in relation to Christianity and capitalism is inspiring. However, what happened to Bretherton’s firm position that capitalism takes multiple forms? When talking about time, it seems as if he tends to present capitalism as one thing that disciplines time in the same way for all people in all places. Second, how is one to study these different time structures in social practices? If, as Bretherton argues, Christianity and capitalism are imbricated in each other, then that must be the case even when it comes to time structures. Here, I see a need for an empirical contribution of the intermingling of Christianity and capitalism in social practices that can complement theological reflections of different time structures. For this, Theodor Schatzki’s theory of timespace activity turned out to be suitable.

<sup>10</sup> While there are many resemblances between Pentecostalism and evangelicalism, there are also differences. While some argue that Pentecostalism is more or less a sub-branch of the evangelical church, others argue (in a more technical sense) that Pentecostal origins in the twentieth century preceded that of the formation of modern evangelicalism, especially in the U.S. See (Yong 2021). I am not interested in making a precise comparison between Bretherton’s presentation of Pentecostal and Catholic political theologies and my empirical material. I am, however, interested in looking at how Bretherton characterizes the two confessional political theologies in relation to capitalism.

<sup>11</sup> This is a term that Bretherton is using when arguing that there is no one-size-fits-all blueprint for the relationship between Christianity and politics (Bretherton 2019, p. 4).

### 3. Temporality and Spatiality in Practices

As suggested above, I am interested in examining how time and space are produced and disrupted in faith-based businesses and with what kind of religious and economic constellations and ethical implications. Using Theodor Schatzki's theory of timespace activity, I will look for how time and space are interwoven in social practices.<sup>12</sup> This means that practices are not only understood as "what people do" but as a social ontology where bundles of practices, as well as the material arrangements of these practices, are crucial to understanding social life (Schatzki 2010, p. 73).<sup>13</sup>

In his book *The Timespace of Human Activity*, Schatzki contrasts his understanding of time and space with objective conceptualizations of time and space. Objective time and space are understood as independent from human activities, such as "the geometric arrangement of a room" or "the time it takes for a grape to ripen on the vine".<sup>14</sup> It is important to note, however, that Schatzki does not disregard objective time and space but sees these as essential for human life. The concept of activity timespace, therefore, is meant to be a complement and not a competitor of or substitute for objective time and space (Schatzki 2010, p. 23). Furthermore, the value of the concept is its usefulness for empirical research (Schatzki 2010, p. xvii).

While positioning himself against objective understandings of time, Schatzki's theory is neither a theory about subjective time and space, meaning how people subjectively construct time and space. Rather, it is a social timespace that is produced objectively in collective practices (Afdal 2020). Schatzki's main contribution, however, is that he theoretically integrates time and space to the unified phenomenon of timespace. Time and space are interwoven and situated within practices.

Building on Heidegger—particularly his analysis of temporality and spatiality in *Being and Time* (Heidegger 2010)—Schatzki argues that human existence (being-in-the-world) is, fundamentally, activity (Schatzki 2010, p. 49). As a human being, one is thrown into a world that already exists. When people are acting, therefore, they are reacting to the world that they have been thrown into. This means that human beings are understood as deeply rooted in their context. Further, this position contrasts with a Cartesian understanding, where human existence is understood as "something encapsulated in an inner sphere standing over and against the world" (Schatzki 2010, p. 48). Human existence, therefore, does not exist independently of where a person is situated.<sup>15</sup> This does not mean, however, that human existence is determined, that actors lack agency, or that human activity is only a passive response. Instead, while humans are immersed in the context in which they act, they can also be "ahead" of themselves. Here, Schatzki refers to Heidegger's concept of "being-ahead-of-itself-already-in-the-world". This means that a human being can project ways of being before herself and act for it. "Whenever a person acts, she acts for the sake of some way of being" (Schatzki 2010, p. 50).

We see how temporality is essential for human existence. People act because of their past, their present, and their future. Temporality in timespace, therefore, is something other than succession—the before and after of events. In activity timespace, the past, the present, and the future occur simultaneously and as long as a person acts.<sup>16</sup> The past shapes activities by being the motivation for acting, the future, and moreover, shapes activities as they are performed for a specific goal or telos (Schatzki 2001, p. 46). At the

<sup>12</sup> Theodor Schatzki counts as one of the leading advocates of the "practice turn" in social theory. See (Savigny et al. 2001).

<sup>13</sup> David Nicolini calls this a "strong practice approach", which means that practices are not only recognized as empirical practices but as a way of understanding the social world. See (Nicolini 2013, p. 30).

<sup>14</sup> Making this distinction, Schatzki's theory follows a line of research in philosophy, the social sciences, and social geography that has focused on social space and spatiality (Shove et al. 2009, p. 35f).

<sup>15</sup> For further ethical reflections on how the human life is always contextual, see, e.g. MacIntyre's argument in *Who's Justice Which Rationality*, where he argues that how you act depends on "who you are and how you understand yourself". (MacIntyre 1988, p. 391).

<sup>16</sup> Here, we see how Schatzki's interpretation of existential time falls under the tradition of Augustine. For Augustine, the time of the soul is a nexus of past, present, and future. "It is now, however, perfectly clear that neither the future, nor the past are in existence . . . Though one might perhaps say: 'There are three times—a present of things past, a present of things present, and a present of things future'. For these three do exist in the mind." Augustine, quoted in (Schatzki 2010, p. 67).



same time, the present is the moment in which the acting occurs and where the past and the future come to be in the present.

Time is essential for human existence, but so is space. Schatzki describes spatiality in timespace as “the world around an actor in its pertinence to and involvement in human activity” (Schatzki 2009, p. 36). This means that space is constituted and not only something that surrounds an actor. “Being-in-the-world is not a matter of, say, a person’s body being entirely surrounded by the entities that make up a given world [ . . . ] To be-in-the-world is to be involved in a world, to proceed within it with, toward, and amid the entities that compose it” (Schatzki 2010, p. 53).

Furthermore, the unity of temporality and spatiality lies in the teleological nature of social practices. Practices have a particular direction or teleos. Furthermore, there is also an affective drive in the teleological structure—an aim for a future good, something valuable. People act because of a desired future, a treasured state of things (Schatzki 2010, p. 178).

In sum, Schatzki’s theory of timespace interweaves time and space, which means that reflections on time cannot be isolated from reflections on space. Further, I use Schatzki’s theoretical concepts as sensitizing devices to help me ask questions about time and space, teleos, and affective drives in the material. Schatzki also helped me elaborate on how religion and economy are temporally and spatially constituted and related in social practices.

When analyzing the intermingling between religion and economy and the relationship between them, my theoretical interest lies in the processes often described as differentiation and dedifferentiation. Simply put, I am interested in analyzing where and when religion and economy are enacted as separate and “pure” and where and when they are part of the same processes and enacted as interwoven and “impure”. Here, I turn to Bruno Latour, and his concepts of purity, impurity, and hybridity. In his well-known book *We Have Never Been Modern*, Latour argues that modernization as a narrative of differentiation, dichotomies, and purification does not reflect the many hybridization processes found in empirical everyday practices (Latour 1993). When analyzing religion and economy, one cannot only understand them as dichotomous, pure and separated entities. Neither can one understand them as features of the same processes. Sometimes, religion and economy are intertwined in hybridizing processes; in other cases, they are quite separate and pure.<sup>17</sup>

#### 4. Comments on Methods

##### 4.1. Research Design and Context

The fieldwork reported here is part of a larger empirical-ethical research project that aims to further our understanding of how religion and economy relate to each other in the two Christian movements BAM and EoC. A further aim is to analyze what the empirical findings might contribute to the field of Christian ethics.<sup>18</sup> In this particular article, I explore parts of the collected material, namely that which originates from fieldwork in one BAM business in the American South and one EoC business in Eastern Canada. The study is designed as an ethnographically informed multiple-case study. I chose an ethnographic approach with the intent to get first-hand experiences and explorations of how religion and economy relate to each other in different social practices on the basis of participant observation and interviews. As stated by Yin, the case study approach is a good way to study complex phenomena (Yin 2014). Furthermore, the multiple in-depth strategy helped

<sup>17</sup> Philip Goodchild uses the term “pure” in a similar way when criticizing Kathryn Tanner for articulating a “pure” Christianity that helps maintain a sharp separation between economics and religion which is, he argues, characteristic for the protestant world. Goodchild thereby criticizes Tanner for refusing to discuss how Christians are supposed to live out their calling in material practices and that she hence is creating “pure religion” (Goodchild 2019, p. 4).

<sup>18</sup> The project as a whole includes studies of policy documents as well as ethnographic material from fieldwork. Considering the overall aim of the project to get a richer understanding of how religion and economy relate to each other in Christian faith-based businesses, the two movements BAM and EoC were chosen as examples of this phenomena. Both networks run for-profit businesses and operate globally. While the networks represent very different theological and cultural traditions, they share an aim of challenging the classical divide between “spiritual” and “worldly” and thereby between religion and economy. The movements are thereby similar enough yet different enough to compare. Furthermore, the movements have not yet been compared through empirical and critical analysis.

to illustrate contrasts and similarities in two different businesses with different theological and cultural affiliations and traditions.

As observed by Hammersley and Atkinson, most ethnographic research is concerned with producing descriptions or explanations of particular phenomena (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, p. 21). Considering this article's overall aim to explore how religion/Christianity and economy relate to each other in faith-based businesses, two cases were chosen to give access to that particular phenomena. One is situated in the American South and describes itself as being part of the evangelical movement BAM.<sup>19</sup> The other company is located in Eastern Canada and is part of the Catholic network EoC.<sup>20</sup>

When doing ethnographic research, pragmatic considerations often play an essential role in the sampling process since there is generally a wide range of settings that could be relevant for the study of a specific phenomenon. Furthermore, since the data collection is often intensive, expensive and time-consuming, this has implications for what is viable and not (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, p. 30). I started out with the intention to do my ethnographic fieldwork in the US only. After mapping out all of the two networks' businesses in the US, I picked out a handful of BAM businesses and a handful of EoC businesses that were similar enough to compare. After considering the distance between them and housing possibilities for my family and me in the different areas where the businesses were placed, I contacted a few businesses. Out of these, two were chosen because of good initial contact as well as promised easy access to the field and good documentary information on the businesses' webpages. Both selected companies were situated in the Eastern United States.

However, it turned out that the EoC business, where I was planning to go, had misunderstood the aim of my presence in the company and hence had expectations from me that I could not fulfil due to the aim of the research. After contacting other scholars on EoC and people involved in the network of EoC in North America, I was recommended to contact a business in Eastern Canada, which they thought would be a good case for the study. After a couple of emails, I was welcomed by the owner.

The BAM business, in the American South, is a small company with 22 full-time employees. The customers are primarily nonprofit and faith-based organizations but also some private businesses. During my fieldwork, I found that two of the employees were women. These numbers reflect the overall gender balance in this particular industry in the U.S.<sup>21</sup> The ownership of the business is split between two men.

EoC is a small business with five full-time employees. During my time in the business all full-time employees were female, which reflects the gender balance in this particular industry in Canada.<sup>22</sup> The woman who owns the business has strong personal relationships with the global EoC movement, and she volunteers at the local Focolare center<sup>23</sup> once a week. Considering the overall purpose to explore how religion/Christianity and economy relate to each other in faith-based businesses, these two cases were chosen to give access to that particular phenomenon. Furthermore, the businesses are similar enough, yet different enough, to compare and contrast.

While the businesses' precise locations will not be revealed due to the anonymization of the empirical material, some attention needs to be made to the political economy as well as

<sup>19</sup> BAM is a relatively new movement within the evangelical protestant church. The network can broadly be described as a Christian-led, for-profit business venture that aims to function as an instrument for Mission in the world. The movement makes a distinction between business for mission and business as mission (Johnson 2009, p. 27–28).

<sup>20</sup> EoC is a Christian socio-economic movement and describes itself as providing support for businesses or productive organizations of various juridical forms. The movement wants to put an end to social injustice and create an economic system built on communion. The movement sprang out of the Catholic lay organization Focolare. (EoC 2019). For much of the economical thinking behind EoC, see e.g., (Bruni and Zamagni 2007); (Bruni 2012); (Bruni and Smerilli 2015).

<sup>21</sup> The percentage of women in this industry in the U.S. is around 9%. Since this figure includes administrative, executive, and office positions, the BAM business in this study reflects the average gender structure in this specific industry.

<sup>22</sup> Around 70% of the people working in this industry in Canada are women.

<sup>23</sup> Focolare is a lay organization within the Catholic Church that focuses on spiritual and social renewal. It was founded by Chiara Lubich in Trent, Italy, in 1943 (Focolare 2020). For a historical overview of the Focolare and other lay Catholic movements, see (Faggioli 2016).

the public role of religion within the regions in which each business is located. First, BAM is located in the neoliberal context of the American South (Johnson 2019). Furthermore, the American South is still under influence of a dominant evangelical culture with a distinctive construction of the place of religion in public life. With increasing immigration from all parts of the world, however, the American south's religious landscape is changing rapidly (Harvey 2015). Second, EoC is situated in the social-democratic context of Eastern Canada. As has been pointed out by Haddow, there are significant differences within this region between a “coordinated market-economy” in Quebec and a “liberal market economy” in Ontario (Haddow 2015). As has been stated by Cook, however, over the last three or four decades, all welfare state models and political economies have been shifting in a neoliberal direction (Cook 2016). Furthermore, Eastern Canada has its own regimes of secularity and has undergone a rapid form of secularization since the 1970s and onward (Lyon and Die 2000).

#### 4.2. Data Collection and Questions of Generalization

In 2018, I spent one month in each business doing participant observations and interviews. I did around 180 h of participate observations in the two businesses where I was focusing on the three categories: setting, people and behavior (Bailey 2018, p. 96).<sup>24</sup> Since most of the observation took place inside the offices where people were using their computers, I, too, had a small notebook available and took field notes continuously during the day. When the observations took place outside the office, I took notes in a small memo. The observations functioned as a key form of the data collection. However, talking to people about what I had observed as well as asking questions about things such as their feelings, values and beliefs was equally important.

In all, I conducted five interviews in the Catholic company—four interviews with employees and one interview with the owner. I conducted six interviews in the evangelical business—four interviews with employees and one interview each with the two owners. Although the number of interviewed staff is limited, one should bear in mind that the total number of people working in the EoC office does not amount to more than five. Furthermore, all of the empirical data were anonymized, which means that the names used in the analysis are all pseudonyms.

Given the limited sample size of this case study, the aim is not to draw wide-ranging conclusions about evangelical and catholic timespaces in general. As has been argued by Bent Flyvbjerg, case studies often contain narratives of complexities and contradictions of real life that are not always easy to summarize in general propositions and theories. Critics of the case study often see this as a draw-back. Flyvbjerg, however, argues that a particular “thick” or hard-to-summarize narrative might be a sign that the study has found a particularly rich problematic (Flyvbjerg 2001, p. 84). Hence, I would argue, that the findings in this study are transferable, not as generalizations but as being recognizable in other settings.<sup>25</sup>

#### 4.3. Data Analysis

A thematic analysis was used to understand the dynamics between different key concepts in the empirical material (Ryan and Bernard 2003). Practically, this means I first coded transcripts from field notes and interviews from each workplace, which allowed me to develop emerging themes from each case. The transcripts were read several times to identify all sections in the material where religion and economy were present through language in use, materiality, and actions as well as to identify the different timespaces in the material. Secondly, I analyzed the transcripts using key concepts from Schatzki's theory of timespace as sensitizing devices as well as the theoretical concepts of differentiation

<sup>24</sup> In order to help me focus on what I was observing, I was also paying attention to Spradley's nine features of social situations: (1) Space: The physical places, (2) Objects: the physical things that are present, (3) Actors: the people involved, (4) Act: single actions people do, (5) Activity: a set of related acts people do, (6) Event: a set of related activities that people carry out, (7) Time: the sequencing that take place over time, (8) Goals: the things people are trying to accomplish, (9) Feelings: the emotions felt and expressed (Bailey 2018, p. 98).

<sup>25</sup> Tracy talks about transferability as a study's “potential to be valuable across a variety of contexts or situations” (Tracy 2010, p. 845).



and dedifferentiation. This means I was looking for words and sentences in the transcripts related to people's motivations or ideals (past), activities (present), and sought-for ends or teleos (future) as well as affections. I also looked for words and sentences related to religion and economy being enacted through language in use, materiality and actions as pure or impure. After concluding the individual analyses, I did a cross-case analysis searching for variations as well as resemblances between the two cases.

In the article, I am referring both to *capitalism* and *economy* when discussing the empirical material. Capitalism, in a broad sense, is often described as an economic, political, and social system in which a country's property, business, and industry are controlled by private owners for profit rather than by the state. Capitalism, however, can be many things, and several different terms, such as "new", "late", or "disorganized" capitalism, are often used to describe the characteristics of economic practices that have emerged since the 1970s, contrasted to, for example, "Fordist" or "industrial" capitalism. Several scholars writing about work and workplaces use the term "flexible capitalism" to refer to the numerous new forms of production, exchange, and human resource management that these economies have introduced (Kjaerulff 2015, pp. 5–7). One of the central features of "flexible capitalism" is that it prioritizes improvisation over planning and that it emphasizes disruption over anything that is fixed in the chain of production, exchange, and consumption (Snyder 2016, p. 5). While there are many aspects of "flexible capitalism" that could be discussed in relation to the empirical material, the aim of this study is not to study the general features of capitalism but to study how religion and economy relate to each other in social practices. Therefore, I often use the word "economy" when referring to economic activities and how economic resources are talked about and implemented in social practices. These economic practices are, however, interrelated with other economic practices that are all nexuses of an economic system.

Further, I am using both Christianity and religion when writing about religion in the empirical material. The definition of religion is a complicated subject.<sup>26</sup> However, in this article, both religion and Christianity refer to lived, or practiced, Christian faith. The aim of the study, therefore, is not to study theological beliefs, or Christian doctrines but to study how lived Christianity is enacted in social practices.

## 5. Religious–Economic Timespaces

Religion and economy relate in various ways in the empirical material. Hence, the aim of this analysis is not to show that religion is present in these businesses but to analyze what it is that merges, where and when it happens, and with what ethical implications. Drawing on Schatzki, I will explore how time and space is practiced in the two cases as different religious and economic constellations, meaning I will describe the two cases as different religious/economic timespaces.

### 5.1. EoC: Struggling Timespace

Before I started my fieldwork in the Catholic business, I received an email from Marie, the owner, in which she told me that she hoped that I did not have too-high expectations for the fieldwork: "Because we are just regular human beings trying to follow the principles of the EoC, but not always succeeding (loving one another and living the Gospel is not always easy)".

During my time at the company, it became apparent that the struggle Marie had expressed in the email about striving to follow the EoC guidelines but not always "succeeding" was something that she often returned to in our conversations. The employees, on the other hand, were also struggling with EoC. Still, they often had conflicting or complementary perspectives to those of the owner on how religion and economy should be

<sup>26</sup> For a discussion about religion as a modern concept, see (Nongbri 2013, pp. 2–4). Even though the term religion is problematic, I agree with Linda Woodhead, who argues that instead of responding to the criticism of religion by abandoning the term, it is more fruitful if scholars become "critically aware of the scope, variety and contingency of the term and its uses—and so better be able to justify and critique their own conceptual choice" (Woodhead 2011, p. 138).

integrated. Further, there was also a general struggle in the business about how to talk about money and how to relate to the “selling culture”, which is an inevitable part of being a for-profit business. As an example, there was a bell in the office that the receptionist rang when someone made a deal with a client. As a researcher, I experienced the ritual of ringing the bell as a form of encouragement for the person who had made the deal as well as a motivation for everyone in the office to continue working hard on selling their products. The receptionist, however, who was the one ringing the bell, was reluctant to talk about selling as something positive.

When you walk in here, you know you’re not working for the money. I mean I know it sounds silly but [ . . . ] You don’t go catching “I just made so much commission”. We have this thing where I go and ring the bell. It’s just to let someone know that [someone in the office has sold the product], and that’s it. And if you ever want to work for commission and bonus and all that, you don’t belong here, so they don’t stay [ . . . ] that way I don’t like the word sell here.

The tension that the receptionist expressed can be described as having to do with being a Christian business that is “sitting within” capitalism but also having an aim to be different. This tension causes a moral order full of struggles as well as creativity for the practitioners. Denise, the receptionist, had been working at EoC for two years when I got to know her. Being in her 60s, she had much work experience from other businesses in the industry. Her past experiences were important for how she navigated in her present work. She knew the industry well and often came up with new marketing strategies. EoC, however, was different from other places where she had been working in its way of integrating religion and spirituality into the business. As she was thrown into the business, she tried to make sense of what kind of values one should and should not have. Being a for-profit business, the business’s whole existence is based on selling and making money. Denise, however, does not like to use the word “sell”. Having spent some years in the practice, she knew that the goal or teleos is not just about the economic relations and making as much money as possible. Instead, the basic idea with EoC, argues Denise, is “that the business should give something back to the community”. At the same time, however, she does ring the bell to let everyone know that someone just made a good deal. This kind of tension suggests that the “rational” logic of profitability, on which the market rests, is reframed in the EoC business so that it gets its meaning when carried out to create greater communion. This aim of re-embedding the capitalist logic is explicit in the economic thinking around EoC.<sup>27</sup> In what follows, I will give some more examples of how time and space are enacted in the business as a struggling religious-economic timespace.

One practice where tensions regarding EoC became noticeable for me as a researcher was in relation to the meditation room. There was a meditation room in the middle of the office that the owner, Marie, proudly showed me on my first day of fieldwork. Marie told me that she had learned from another Christian business owner that if one cares about the wellbeing of one’s employees, and also about the economy, then one needs to have spirituality integrated into the business. Marie wanted the room to be a place where people could come and just relax and meditate or take some time away from work and “find themselves”. She told me that she thought that it was important that the business could “live that” since it was something that they also wanted to give to their customers. Taking time in the meditation room was for her a practice where the economy of communion was “lived”. Personally, she liked to go to the meditation room in the mornings to, as she described it, “have a moment of prayer and really to offer my day and ask the Holy Spirit to guide me, eh, yeah. My invisible partner”.

Denise, the receptionist, often went to the meditation room together with the owner. Since there was no set time for prayer, Denise asked the owner to tell her when she was going so that she could join her. Denise told me that she actually wished to go to

<sup>27</sup> Lorna Gold argues that EoC “frames the ‘rational’ logic of profitability on which the market rests with a greater logic that accords value to every member of the working community as a human person who finds fulfilment, above all, in communion with other.” (Gold 2010, p. 36).

the meditation room more often. The reason she did not go every day had to do with experiences of stress. At the same time, however, Denise reasoned with herself and said that during those times when she was experiencing much stress, the best thing that she could do was to meditate or to just sit in the room for ten minutes.

Like if you get very, very stressed, you just take ten minutes and go meditate or just go there because the lighting, the atmosphere is so ... you can almost feel it, when you go in there [ ... ] My way of seeing it, I'd love to go ten minutes every day. I think it would be nice. And nobody is stopping me from going. It's just that I have to recondition myself and you know say, yes, your reports are due but in ten minutes you'll feel better. And you won't be so frustrated or stressed with that question you're asking yourself because it's not balancing or whatever. Go meditate and come back relaxed and that's it.

There is something about the meditation room, the lighting and the atmosphere, that affects Denise. Therefore, how should one describe this space? The meditation room could be portrayed in several ways. It is a quiet room without any windows in the middle of a busy office setting. There is an icon on one of the walls and a water fountain in a corner. There are candles that can be lit and colorful cushions to sit on, and the whole room is a mix of holiness and ordinary life. Denise tells me that sometimes when she goes to the room together with the boss, they read a scripture or follow a liturgy or pray for someone who is sick or they pray for themselves and the business.

The room can further be described as becoming a religious space in relation to the activities that are taking place in the room (the prayer, the kneeling, the reading) as well as in relation to the materiality and language in use. It is clear that the physical room and material artifacts are indispensable for the meditation practice. Denise enjoys just sitting there and describes how spending time in the room affects her.

However, the practice of meditation and prayer is not limited to the physical room. The scriptures that are being read bring in stories from other times and places, both past and future. Additionally, the icon is a window that opens up for different realities. Different past experiences and present concerns as well as emotions are brought together in the practice and help the actors to navigate. The meditation practice is further stretched out in time and space. Denise describes that she feels better after taking time in the meditation room, and she also talks about (which I will come back to later) how spending time in the meditation room has increased her empathy.

The teleoaffective structure of the meditation timespace can further be described as trying to keep religion and economy integrated in the everyday activities of business life. Additionally, relating to Bretherton's presentation about *kairos* and *chronos*, the meditation practice can be described as *kairos*, a time that opens up for different realities and different alternative actions within the everyday chronological time of business life. However, the religious practice can also be described as *chronos*. In the short quote above, Denise mentions "ten minutes" three times. It seems important for her to measure and give an approximation of how much objective, chronological time she spends in the room. The measuring of time, and the negotiation between different kinds of time—such as work time and leisure time—is here having the role of a sort of moral incentive. That the timespace of meditation/prayer can be described not only as *kairos* but also as *chronos* relates to Marx's and Weber's complementary perspectives on the phenomenon of time discipline.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Benjamin Snyder gives a good overview of how Marx and Weber give complementary perspectives on chronological time. For Marx, chronological time is inseparable from the wider phenomenon of commodification. Weber, alternatively, argues that chronological time is a pre-modern phenomenon with its roots in medieval Christianity and especially the Benedictine monasteries and thereby assists the ascetic laborer in her effort to achieve virtue. Snyder also discusses how E. P. Thompson shows that Marx and Weber give complementary perspectives to the same phenomenon: time discipline. See (Snyder 2016, p. 30f).

Apart from Marie and Denise, I did not notice anyone else entering the room during my four weeks of fieldwork.<sup>29</sup> When I asked the other employees about it, they told me they did not have time or did not want to take time from work to pray or meditate. Eve argues that there is a tension between how the room is being presented and how it is being used.

I think sometimes there is a sort of lie or so. Marie is always very proud to present this meditation room. Every time there is a new employee, every time there is someone visiting the business: Look, we've got a meditation room! Yes, and nobody uses it because nobody's got the time. Nobody! Nobody! Because this is a business place, and it's difficult for people to think it's a business where you can have pleasure, too. A kind of pleasure ... you can relax. I think we don't think about relaxing like that. We prefer, if we have to relax, we go and visit our friends in the other office, we speak together, we drink coffee, but we don't go to this meditation room. Never! It's a pity.

Eve makes it clear that from her point of view, the employees do not feel that they have time to meditate or pray during the workday. If they would spend time in the meditation room, then they would feel they had to compensate for that "lost time" later. It is not as one might think, however, that Eve is cynical about meditation as such. On the contrary, she thinks that "it's a pity" that the room is not used more. Eve, however, does not think that the people working in this business want to have leisure time at work. She exemplifies what she means by giving an example of working in a company such as Google.

In some businesses you know, in big companies there is a library, there is a room for sports, a room for different things you know, oh yes, people feel happy there. Ehm, maybe they feel happy, but they work longer because they feel so happy but the pleasure, leisure time is on the business place, so the day is extended, you know. So you do everything in your business place. So, I don't know which concept is the best, but I don't think that people want to lose or want to waste half an hour meditating here because they've got other things to do outside, they want to go outside.

We see how Eve compares meditation with other kinds of leisure offered in big companies. Eve does not think that the relaxation or the *kairos* that is evolving from the meditation practice is something that should be sought for in EoC. Instead, Eve sees a danger of including too much *kairos* in the business so that people extend the time spent in the office because they are "so happy". Eve argues that it is *kairos*, not *chronos*, that rules over Google and disciplines the workers so that they work longer hours. She thereby aligns with scholars who have shown that *kairos* rules over newer forms of post-industrial "flexible" production (Snyder 2016, p. 4). Further, it seems as if Eve cannot see how the religious practice of meditation is actually bringing in something transformative or challenging into the economic and structural side of the business.

Related to this, Eve is also reflecting on how the wages—according to her and several other of the employees—are too low. This, she argues, causes tension in the company between religion and business. She tells me that since the business is selling products that focus on wellbeing and the clients' human side, there also has to be "harmony" in the business. However, when the wages are low, the employees feel more reluctant to follow the EoC guidelines and, for example, accept that part of the profit is given to the poor.<sup>30</sup> On several occasions, Eve is talking about how she is afraid that the business is

<sup>29</sup> A contributing factor to why Denise took time in the meditation room while the other employees did not, could be that she as a receptionist had different work assignments than the rest of the employees. However, Denise herself described her work situation as being stressful and she complained about having to step in where other people hadn't finished their work in time.

<sup>30</sup> This tension between giving money to the poor and paying attention to the employees in the workplace was something that Lorna Gold came across in her empirical research on EoC. One director that she interviewed argued that it was pointless for him to "love the distant poor in Brazil" if he could not love the person beside him. Even though the directors wanted to give money to the poor, they found it hard to do so if it resulted in paying less attention to the people in their own business. (Gold 2010, p. 132).

about to lose its roots and what they want to do and be because of the pressure, the rush. She believes they must go back to the origins of EoC and the owner's dream to give the opportunity to every employee to develop herself and to be a good person. To sum it up, for Eve, a real integration of the EoC spirituality in the business should affect both the working conditions and the economic conditions for the employees. Or to put it in another way, the motivational past, the roots, as well as the aim for a future of humanizing the economy, has to be acted out within the rush and pressure in the present.

As has been shown in the analysis so far, the meditation room is causing a division in the office. For those using it, the meditation timespace offers time away from work as well as a place where religion is integrated into the workday. For those who do not use the room, however, the room symbolizes a place that takes time from work or a place where one "wastes" time.

### 5.2. *Scattered Ideals*

While some of the employees expressed that they would like to see more economy of communion in the business, the owner found it hard to pass on. One crucial factor for this tension seemed to be that the employees did not get enough access to the owner's past or motivation for running the company as an EoC business. The owner's relationship with the local Focolare community as well as past encounters with people from the global EoC movement are played out in the present as an essential inspirational factor in her striving to run the business according to the EoC guidelines. As an example, Marie describes how affected she was after an EoC gathering in Rome some years ago. "When I came back from [ . . . ] the visit in Rome with the Pope. I was on fire when I came back, I was just so passionate about it". Marie also has a framed photo of Chiara Lubich (the founder of the Focolare Movement and EoC) in her office, and she tells me that she likes to think of Chiara as her spiritual grandmother. However, even though Marie's past experiences play such an important role for her personally, she struggles with how to pass it on to the rest of the people in the business.

It's hard to pass it on. It's very hard. For me it was such a revelation and it doesn't have the same impact on everybody. [ . . . ] I don't really feel that they are striving to really, to really live it, I'm not sure if they fully understand the magnitude of it and how much it could totally transform the business life. And in the beginning, I was more eh, active, and yeah, lately I feel I kind of been more passive about it.

For Marie, getting to know about EoC was life changing. She also has a clear view of how the business could be totally transformed if the employees only tried to "live it!". Marie often comes back to the expression "to live it". From her point of view, the employees do not really understand what EoC is all about. For example, she tells me that the employees just want to "spread the word" or "use" EoC for marketing. The employees, however, tell me that they think it is stupid to keep EoC as "a philosophy for themselves". Several of the employees believe that it is essential for the customers to know in what ways the company is different and, therefore, also more expensive than many competing businesses. The employees think the customers should know what the business is actually doing—that they give away part of the profit to social projects and that they do retreats for homeless people, etc.

While Marie has become more "passive" about EoC and does not want to "impose" the economy of communion on the employees, it seems as if the employees wish for more access to Marie's motivation, not less. As discussed above, Eve is afraid that the business is about to "lose its roots". Several of the employees also ask for more information and openness about economic decisions based on the guidelines, such as how much money the business gives away to EoC every year as well as information about where the money is sent. The owner has a strong vision of how religion should be present in the business, and it seems as if she feels that the employees' perspectives on using religion in marketing are a far too "capitalistic" way of doing religion.



While the timespace in EoC is characterized by struggling, there are also nuances.

### 5.3. Timespace Expansion

Denise, the employee who often joins the owner for prayer, gives an interesting example of how timespace is spreading out. Denise describes how working and being in the business—as well as the fact that there is a meditation room in the office—has made her perform actions of empathy outside the office. To exemplify what she means, she tells me several detailed stories about how she has started to buy food for people in the street as well as spending time with and dining with poor and lonely people in her neighborhood.

It brought back my empathy and maybe increased my empathy. I notice people in need of help more, and I react more. Like I had a, someone on Friday, I was going to meet one of my brothers for dinner, and right before I arrived there was this gentleman that stopped me and said, “Mam, could you help me please? I haven’t eaten for two days, and I’m very hungry; I don’t want money, I just want you to buy me food. [ . . . ]” So, eh, I stopped. I could have said no, I can’t. But for some reason I didn’t do that.

When I ask her what these stories have to do with EoC, she tells me that working in the company has increased her “human side”.

[ . . . ] like my empathy. I find that with everything that we do every day, it makes you think more and the fact that there’s also a room here where you can go meditate or pray or whatever when you feel the need to. That got me back to, eh, paying attention to my Bible at night or saying a prayer before going to sleep. Things that I had stopped doing. And that I have to say is from [the name of the business]. It kind of brought me back to, eh, looking back to my religion.

Denise grew up Catholic but left the Church as a young woman. Now, her past has been picked up and is being acted out in the present—and so is her future as she is acting out a wished-for empathy. As her past, as well as her future, are being acted out in the present, time and space are produced and transformed. The activities at EoC are thereby stretched out in time and space. Denise was thrown into a lot of different practices when she started working at the company. Additionally, these practices have, according to Denise, increased her human side and led her to do good to others. The quote also shows how reasoning and thinking are integrated parts of the practices. Denise did not start her moral reasoning by thinking and reasoning outside of the practice or before she started it. Instead, the reasoning is taking place in the practice.

### 5.4. Timespace in EoC

The analysis shows how the timespace in the Catholic business is characterized by struggling. This struggle seems to be caused by a tension between certain ideals of how religion and economy should relate to each other, on one hand, and how the practice was evolving and timespaces were created, on the other. The main ideal can be described as being a business where religion and economy intermingle and thereby create something greater than the sum of its parts, namely an unpure religious–economic timespace—an economy of communion. The ideal, furthermore, can be described as not uncritically accepting the market as an amoral system but to frame the “rational” logic of profitability with a greater logic of communion (Gold 2010, p. 36). The practitioners are experiencing the tension of being a faith-based business that is sitting within capitalism; however, they are also wanting to challenge its culture from the inside. Moreover, these ideals were causing an ambivalence in how to talk about money or how to “use” the economy of communion in marketing. In short, the ideals generate both dreams and uncertainties about how to be different.

As mentioned, struggles and tensions were intensified as the practice and the timespaces that had evolved differed from these ideals. This tension was further intensified by conflicting perspectives among the actors on how religion and economy should actually

relate to each other in the practice. The meditation room, as an example, can be described as a timespace that opened up a door for new possibilities for some of the practitioners. At the same time, however, the religious–economic timespace was experienced as provocative for other employees. The distinctiveness of an objective space, a physical room in the office, was a constant reminder of this tension. Additionally, the fact that there was no set time scheduled for meditation, nor any strict agreement on whether to measure the time spent meditating as leisure or work time, appeared as provoking for some. Further, the business lacked a timespace as distinctive as the meditation room, where these different perspectives on the relationship between religion and economy could be discussed and negotiated.

Further, the owner seems to believe in the practice itself having the religious potential for living faithfully in the business world. This means that she is not interested in hiring only Catholics or “religious” people that are to live out ethical principles in the business. Instead, the owner seems to believe that the good should be implicit in the communion. Her focus, therefore, is not to put ethical principles or theological beliefs into practice but to “live it”. She is, however, very self-critical about the way the business is actually living the economy of communion, and she does not believe that the employees understand its potential. Part of this tension, as discussed earlier, seems to have to do with the employees not getting access to the owner’s past, and that a practice of discussing and negotiating how to live the economy of communion is missing. It is, however, apparent that the teleological drive or direction in the business is affecting people more than the owner seems to be aware of. This teleological structure is constituted collectively but negotiated individually. The drive can be described as working not just for themselves but for the common good. This teleos is further negotiated differently by the different actors.

Lastly, we see how religion and economy are enacted both as *kairos* and *chronos*.

### 5.5. BAM: *Confident Timespace*

Michael, one of the two owners and the president of the business, proudly showed me the “Mission Wall” during my first day of fieldwork. The mission wall was made up of pictures of missionaries that the business supported financially as well as pictures of schools and other buildings that people from the business had built during shorter mission trips to South America. As we stood by the wall, Michael told me a long story about the birth of the business and how God had spoken to him in his dreams about the business’s name as well as its purpose. He also told me how he and the other owner had gotten advice from some other Christian business people to tithe corporately.

And I said what does that mean? Well, just like you would tithe personally off your income, you need to tithe corporately out of your income before you take a salary. And I’m thinking, oh my gosh, that’s a lot of money, and it was scary just like when you’re starting your personal tithes. And we started that [ . . . ] It’s been awesome, it’s been really good.

While the religious-economic timespace in EoC is characterized by struggling, BAM’s timespace is characterized by confidence. One important aspect of this confident timespace seems to be that both the owners and the employees identify themselves as being “different” in how they combine business and Christianity. The deontological principle of tithing and hence the business’s support in mission, is one important aspect of how this difference is understood. Additionally, Michael describes it as being “awesome” and “really good”. In BAM, the mere existence of the tithing account and the money that continuously comes into the account are thereby a constant reminder for the people in the business that they are following their aim. This can be contrasted with EoC, where the practice of giving away part of the profit is not in itself enough for the owner to feel that they are following their aim of being different. We see how, in BAM, the biblically inspired principle of tithing regulates the economic boundaries in the business. The economy as a system, however, is not explicitly described as something that needs to be challenged.

The timespace in the evangelical business further creates a kind of confident religious fellowship that focuses on character formation. John, who has been working in the business for two years, describes the religious community in the business as follows:

Interviewer: In what ways is Christianity present in this business?

John: I think the first and foremost way is just with the staff together. Eh, we know about each other really well. We know what's going on in our lives; we pray for each other. We know each other's kids' names; we know each other's wives' names; we see each other regularly. I think just the first of all, the brotherhood; sisterhood among the people here is really evident when you come in [ . . . ] And then we are encouraged to read the Word here. We're encouraged to spend time in worship and prayer at work, and we do that together as a staff at our staff meetings. We go through material that helps to prepare us to be, not necessarily better workers but just to be better people period. To be a better believer, a better husband, a better father. So it's kind of hard to explain what it's like. I cannot put my finger on one thing, so the thing is, it just permeates the entire culture here. Everything that we say and do.

The culture in the company is described by John and other employees as a community where people know each other really well and care for each other. John further explains how there is a drive in the business to become "better people". To put it differently, there is a kind of character formation taking place. This is also something that Michael, one of the owners, describes as one of his main concerns in running the business.

During one of our many conversations, Michael tells me that he loves knowing that people feel good about coming to the business and feel as though they are learning more than just the profession; he wants for them to be able to develop both personally and spiritually. Michael also thinks it would be irresponsible of him not to see what God has put right in front of him. "You know, He has given me this, so I have to do my best". Michael further tells me that this kind of pastoral care and mentoring that he is doing is something that he could not do in the "secular company" where he used to work in the past and where the job was just about "doing a good job and making as much money as possible". Michael, however, wants to do more. He wants to teach his employees some life skills as well as relational skills.

One example of what this kind of teaching looks like is when Michael, during a Friday meeting, talks about how to be a good parent and a good spouse. There are a lot of different things happening during the Friday meeting—presentations about business strategies and reminders about encouraging subcontractors who are doing a good job are mixed up with Bible readings as well as teaching and a prayer for the victims at a school shooting. When teaching about parenting, Michael discusses passages from the Bible and shares personal reflections about how modern technology is forming our relationships and our behavior. He tells his employees that he wants to teach his children to listen to the birds and not only sit with their iPhones. Here, we see how the Christian teaching of how to be a good parent ends up in a recommendation to guide the children into kairotic or holy moments of listening to the birds in God's creation.

Michael also asks the employees to fill out a spreadsheet before the next meeting in which they are asked to register how much time they spend with their children and spouses every day during one week. He tells the employees that it will be a good exercise for him as well and that it will "probably be minutes rather than hours".

The spreadsheet shows how religion in BAM is also about chronological time. Chronos, here, is used as a moral guide to help the actors become better people and parents.

There are, however, no further discussions taking place about how much clock-time is spent in the office or how much time is spent working or thinking about work when at home (several of the employees describe how they do not fully leave work when at home as they always answer the phone and check emails). This suggests that the religious teaching about time does not include any discussions about any broader ethical responsibilities

that the business might have in regard to the work-time of the employees. The religious teaching thereby does not challenge the economic side of the business.

How, then, is one to describe the religious–economic timespace in this evangelical business as exemplified so far? First, the office is becoming a religious–economic space in relation to the Mission Wall, the spreadsheets, and the Bible verses that are read as well as the bodies that listen, work, pray, and discuss. Past experiences are, furthermore, played out in the present, such as when the owner’s past experiences from being deprived of the possibility to teach life skills in his former workplace motivates him in his current context to take care of “his flock” and teach them life skills. The teleoaffective drive in the timespace can further be described as supporting the mission economically and to be a business that offers to mentor its employees in ways that most often take place in congregational settings. This means that the evangelical timespace does not make a distinction between a religious sphere and an economic sphere. However, even though religion is everywhere in the business—in the materiality and language as well as in its activities—the religious sphere and the economic sphere remain quite pure, meaning there are no real changes in either the economic or the religious sphere. Religion restricts economy by deontological principles, such as tithing, and thereby regulates its boundaries, yet not aiming to transform it. Additionally, as mentioned, the religious teaching about everyday life, such as time spent with one’s children, remains quite religiously pure. The economic sphere, however, also regulates religion. We see how the religious fellowship in the company is described as an essential aspect of being different and being a Christian business. The access and belonging to this religious community could, however, be taken away at any time if the company were to be doing poorly economically and the employees would lose their jobs. To sum up, religion is regulating the economic sphere, and the economic sphere is affecting the religious sphere. In this intermingling, however, the two spheres remain quite pure.

Furthermore, there is also an affectionate drive to be different, to do things well, and to become better people, and this drive is characterized by confidence. The owners as well as the employees seem to agree on the motivational past as well as the aimed-for future. There are, however, negotiations taking place.

#### 5.6. *Negotiated Timespace*

In the evangelical business, the principle of tithing is described as a non-negotiable biblical principle that should be followed no matter what. The analyses show, however, that both the owners and the employees find ways to negotiate within this practice. Rob, who works as a project manager, describes how he negotiates the profit margin when estimating a job.

I would say the tension tends to be, for me and what I can tell is we tithe off of our profits. Eh, but there are times when we, eh, might out of the need of the client, or understanding the mission that that client has, or what they are trying to accomplish, that we’re willing to cut some profits from time to time to help them. And so, in that sense we cut our profits and our tithe a little bit, and that’s kind of a tension for me. You know what I mean. Because you’re sitting there thinking, I could be tithing more but I’m directly helping this person who is able to further the kingdom in their way. So, it’s a tension there. And you know, a lot of people don’t understand, eh, when we come to subcontractors for example and say, you’re about five thousand dollars above budget we need you to get down to this number. If those are commercial clients, you know like Bank of America or Wells Fargo or someone like that, I’m not cutting the budget; they’ve got millions of dollars. But when we’re working with [he gives an example of working with a nonprofit client], for example, it’s five thousand that makes or breaks the project. You know, we really need you to get down. And we gotten to a relationship with our subs now where they understand that, but I know at the beginning that was kind of a struggle of getting them to understand why we’re doing what we’re doing.

The different estimations that Rob and several others in the business talk about show how creative negotiations are taking place between the business and various clients and subcontractors. The evangelical business finds ways to cut prices and profits down when supporting their nonprofit clients. Even though the evangelical business has no articulate intention of challenging capitalism, it does negotiate for the sake of their clients. The quote further shows how the teleoaffective drive in this practice, the aim of helping the nonprofit client, is not a future state of affair, but a feature of the present. When Rob is acting for something meaningful, its status as something sought after are aspects of the present activities of cutting profits (Schatzki 2010, p. 172). Further, this shows how the explicit aim in the EoC business, to reframe the logic of profitability within a logic of communion, is implicitly taking place in the evangelical business as timespaces are evolving.

Moreover, these kinds of negotiations are not described as being based on principles, and there is no blueprint answer on how to negotiate in these situations. Instead, the people in the business refer to how they act out of certain motivations and goals based on their Christian faith, their relationships with clients, and knowledge about their client's financial situation. Hence, the moral judgment about good and bad actions takes place in the practices and is based on the co-ordinations of different people's timespaces.

Evangelical Christianity is often described as being closely related to and uncritically supportive of capitalism.<sup>31</sup> However, we see how the practices of this particular business are also a response to capitalism's effects. This is not merely an idealistic vision as they actually do make an impact for their clients. "It's five thousand that makes it or breaks it".

### 5.7. Timespace Expansion

As mentioned, tithing and giving clients a fair price were often mentioned when talking about how Christianity was present in the evangelical business as were the relationships within the business and relationships with clients and subcontractors. However, during my fieldwork, my interest, as a researcher, became increasingly more about the relationships the business had with the local community.

I learned early during my fieldwork that the business was giving money to a homeless center in town. I also heard, from the employees, that the president had made offers for several homeless people to work for him—some had cleaned the office, and others had been trained for the kinds of jobs done by the subcontractors and got actual employment.

One day, I overheard how the younger owner, Michael, was talking to the chaplain about certain issues. He said he needed to go to the gym to get rid of some tension. He said he was tired of giving. He felt he had given and given money and was starting to get tired of it. He told the chaplain that he wanted to be involved in the projects that he supported economically and not only give. When I got the chance to talk to Michael later that week, I asked him about the conversation with the chaplain. He told me that the frustration was about a lot of things. One thing was the homeless center. He felt the business needed to take a further step in its commitment. Even though BAM supported the project financially and also gave employment to people who had gone through their work program, he wanted to do more.

Michael told me how there was one guy from the homeless center who was working on one of their projects at the time. Michael described how he had met him in the parking lot one morning when he got to work. The man, "a short black guy without any teeth—but absolutely clean", was sitting in the parking lot waiting for one of the project managers to pick him up. Michael started to talk to him, and the man told him how he lived in a small apartment with four others and had no car.

The president told me he felt that there was something that "scuffed" when he drove up with his nice car in the parking lot with a luxury coffee in his hand and saw the formerly homeless man sitting there. He said he wanted to do more for those people but was worried about what the next step would be because he knew that it would require a lot of time. He

<sup>31</sup> See, e.g., (Connolly 2008).



was not afraid that it would cost a lot of money but that it would require a lot of time from him and the business. Also, this was only his experience and feelings. He was not sure whether the others in the company would agree with him. He did not want to force the others to get engaged, and he felt that if he were to talk about it, maybe they would feel they had to get involved.

The kind of struggle that the president was expressing has to do with where he and the business should direct their efforts. How much should they support the local community and in what ways? The owner was uncertain about what the others in the business would think about this kind of direction. In contrast to giving money to the mission, which is a *teleos* that everyone who participates in the business practices seems to have in common, engagement with the homeless center is not something that the president was taking for granted everyone would approve of. These kinds of side effects of being a faith-based business were not thought through before the business was started. However, situations and people showed up that caused them to take action and use moral judgment. When I discussed the business's role in the local community with the other owner, he confirmed that this was not something that they had any thoughts about beforehand.

I guess we do that sort of unintentionally. Because we were thinking in terms of a business when we first started. A business that would use the profits for ministry, but I don't think we necessarily thought through how the business itself—other than helping our [nonprofit clients] you know, [selling the product] for a good fair price you know—but I think we've seen through the work of our employees and the lives they've touched that we can really reach in the community that we're part of, so yeah.

The older owner describes how making an impact in the local community was not something that the owners had thought about when starting the business. However, as the employees kept on doing their work, they were simultaneously making relationships with subcontractors, clients, neighbors, charities, etc. in the local community, and the practices within the company were thereby connected with a nexus of other practices. This means that the timespace in the business was stretching out into the local community.

Michael is not sure about how to handle the encounter on the parking lot when his timespace is stretched out. He experiences an urge to get engaged instead of just tithing and sending money to a distant project. He is uncertain, however, as to whether or not this kind of engagement should be part of the business.

### 5.8. *Timespace in BAM*

The analysis shows how the timespace in the evangelical business is characterized by confidence. This confidence can be explained by the presence of certain, distinct things that assures the practitioners that the business is living up to its values and goals, such as the tithing account and the mission wall. The main *teleos*, or goal, furthermore, can be described as twofold. The first is to “do things well”, meaning that each individual should follow certain ethical standards in their everyday work. The second is to generate money for their mission and for charity. Here, we see how the evangelical entrepreneurs embody the possibilities of capitalism as they confidently set up and support mission programs around the world through making use of the freedom of travel as well as practicing independent education when setting up schools abroad.<sup>32</sup> Religion, furthermore, is mainly about individuals following certain teachings and ethical principles found in the Bible and to put this teaching and these principles into practice. Religion, or “the good”, is not, as in EoC, understood as implicit in the practice but mainly as putting Christian teaching and moral principles into practice. It is, therefore, vital that all the employees in the business be believers, or “born again Christians”, as one of the owners expressed it.

<sup>32</sup> This can be compared with how Pentecostals who, in the tradition of the Methodist founder John Wesley, see the world as their parish (Bretherton 2019, p. 148).

The work in the company is also directed forward according to what the people in the business think is valuable. Here, we see how the aim of being different leads to religion deontologically restricting the economy, such as with the principle of always tithing. Religion does not, however, in most cases, transform economy. Furthermore, economy also restricts religion, such as when regulating the boundaries of the religious community.

Contrary to the Catholic business, there are no apparent struggles in BAM regarding language about selling and profitability or anxieties about telling the world they are a faith-based business. However, the difference between the companies when it comes to framing their religiosity is probably affected by how the evangelical business operates in a context still very much influenced by evangelical culture, while the EoC operates in a predominantly secular culture. This does not mean, however, that religion and economy are only enacted as pure and separated in BAM. Instead, negotiations take place when BAM cuts its profit margin for the sake of nonprofit clients, thereby creating an impure religious–economic alternative within capitalism. The religious–economic timespace is further spread out into the local community and into the unjust world in the parking lot. Here, the timespace is no longer characterized by confidence but rather by listening and improvisation.

Lastly, as in the Catholic business, Christianity and capitalism can be described as both *kairos* and *chronos*.

## 6. Discussion

This article engages with how religion and economy relate to each other in faith-based businesses. It also elaborates on the recurrent idea in the theological literature that reflections on different visions of time can advance theological analyses of the relationship between Christianity and capitalism. Following Bretherton, I find that the best way to analyze this relationship is by viewing Christianity and capitalism as “mutually imbricated in each other” (Bretherton 2019, p. 351).

Arguably though, I add a further specification to Bretherton’s overall position through elaborating on an empirical study of two Christian business practices and how the different timespaces in these practices affect the relationship between religion and economy and with what ethical implications. In short, the findings presented above suggest the following. First, I identified how the timespace in the Catholic business was primarily characterized by struggling caused by a tension between certain ideals of how religion and economy should relate to each other on one hand and how the practice was evolving and timespaces were created on the other hand. The ideal, furthermore, can be described as “living” an economy of communion, where religion is primarily understood as practice and where religion and economy intermingle and thereby create an impure religion. The practices and timespaces that evolved, however, were characterized by negotiations and struggles about whether, and/or how, one should keep this intermingling. In many cases, this struggling resulted in enacting a rather pure religion and economy. The analysis also shows that the business seems to lack a time and a place where this struggle could be discussed and negotiated. Furthermore, even though the timespace is characterized by struggling, taking part in the timespace patterns in the practice shaped the actors’ moral imagination and concepts about themselves with a direction toward the wider society and the common good. Lastly, there is no simple dichotomous division between *kairos* and *chronos* in this Christian practice.

Second, the findings suggest that the timespace in the evangelical business is characterized by confidence. This confidence has to do with BAM having a rather distinct and achievable goal when it comes to how they want to be different and how religion should relate to economy. The ideal religion and economy can be described as quite pure, such as when the economy is deontologically restricted by religious principles. BAM places high ethical demands on individual actors but does not think of capitalism as a system that ought to be transformed. For the most part, religion and economy are constituted purely and separately. There are, however, nuances, such as when the business is negotiat-

ing profit margins and thereby creating an alternative impure religious–economic space. Additionally, these kinds of negotiations happen when the practitioners link experiences from the past with future expectations in a kind of improvisation that provides a sense of direction or ethical coherence. The religious–economic timespace is thereby spread out into the local community, where homeless people are offered work and not merely given economic support. Here, the evangelical business re-embeds economic relations within social ones as the timespace evolves. They thereby recognize a tension between them that is not made explicit. As in the Catholic business, Christianity and capitalism come as both *chronos* and *kairos*.

Arguably, these overall findings suggest two main specifications to Bretherton’s presentation of the relationship between Christianity and capitalism. The first specification relates to the identification of important resemblances between the cases even though they have different theological ideals and belong to different confessional traditions.<sup>33</sup> The premise is that the processes that bring these two cases together provide further insight into ways of understanding the relationship between Christianity and capitalism within faith-based businesses. As has been discussed, BAM can be described as living in too little tension with capitalism while having maybe too much confidence in its way of practicing religion. EoC, in contrast, is very aware of the tension, yet has too little confidence and also lacks a “timespace” in which to discuss and negotiate the implications of its religious identity. Further, it is not as easy as simply saying that the evangelical business (only) creates pure religion and economy, where religion is not at all challenging the economy, and that the Catholic business (only) enacts an intertwined and impure religious–economic timespace. Instead, both cases enact religion and economy as both separated and as pure; however, also as intertwining and impure. There seems to be a teleoaffective drive in both practices that cannot by any clear means be described by the movements’ guidelines or their confessional traditions. This teleos directs the practitioners toward the common good through participation in the practices. This further seems to suggest that there is no “non-struggling” alternative to the relationship between Christianity and capitalism in faith-based businesses. Moreover, the conflict or tension between Christianity and capitalism seems to be in need of both an awareness of the tension and struggle as well as an awareness of the need for some measure of confidence. As mentioned, these processes cannot be explained by the businesses’ confessional and theological affiliations. Rather, there seem to be something about the phenomenon of tension-filled and confident faith-based businesses that causes this teleoaffective drive.

I thereby argue that the best way to understand how Christians make sense of the relationship between Christianity and capitalism today is to start in the hybrids, in the intermingling between religion/economy, church/social organizations, capitalism/state. Further, it is of course beneficial to have a presentation of the characteristics of Catholic political theology and Pentecostal political theology, for example. This study, however, shows that what Bretherton describes as characteristics of different confessional political theologies might not be that easy to distinguish in the empirical reality of Christian practices.

As an example, in the presentation of Catholic political theology, Bretherton describes how, in Catholic social thought (CST), work is the central means through which humans exercise their vocations and giftedness. Work in CST as constitutive of personhood and labor (person) over capital is a necessary postulate of any moral vision. Hence, making labor serve capital, thereby making persons serve money, is to invert the moral order. Bretherton also states that, when CST conceptualizes work as a way for people to express their giftedness, work points beyond a mere class-based analysis of work with its focus on the conflict between labor and capital. Hence, work is never only economic, argues Bretherton, but is also social, political, and spiritual. This fine but rather vague description of the meaning of work, however, can be found as much in the evangelical as in the Catholic practice in this study. Alternatively, the support of labor movements and unions, associated

<sup>33</sup> For a comparative analysis of the policy documents of BAM and EoC, see (Ledstam and Afdal 2020).

with CST as a necessary consequence to uphold the dignity of human work, is not present in the Catholic business in this study.<sup>34</sup>

The second contribution relates to how religious–economic timespaces are enacted in the two cases. Again, Bretherton, contrasts chronological time with kairotic time and argues that what is needed is a reclamation of time and space and the “reopening of time and space as a commonwealth free for all and the reopening of time to an eschatological horizon” (Bretherton 2019, p. 156). Further, this reopening has to include the possibilities of kairotic time within the structures that capitalist “time disciplines” demand. The issue at stake for Bretherton, and several other theologians, is how the ends and means of capitalism determine social relations and the work different timespaces do in constructing social relations. However, while Bretherton, in *Christ and the Common Life*, discusses time and space at a conceptual level, this study adds further insights into how religious–economic timespaces are actually enacted in social practices.

Hence, a further specification of Bretherton’s position is to make it explicit that it is not as easy as to simply say that capitalism represents chronos and Christianity kairos. A closer look at how the religious–economic timespaces are produced rather suggests that capitalism comes as both chronos and kairos in today’s flexible capitalism (Snyder 2016). Chronos is the time that the practitioners mark and measure; it is a container in which certain events are measured as work and others as leisure time. However, capitalist time discipline also comes as kairos. Kairos symbolizes a more qualitative conception of time, such as rhythm or when the entrepreneur sees a window of opportunity. Kairos values flexibility and fluidity. Hence, kairos is experienced by the practitioners when they are “always working” and answering the phone at home, or when they are closing a deal just at the right time before the customer’s mind changes.

Christianity, in contrast, is not only kairos but also comes as chronos. For example, the spreadsheet used in the evangelical business to measure how much time was spent with one’s children and partner can be understood as more than a mere tool for external capitalist control—the owner uses it as a technique for becoming “better people”, a kind of moral guide to achieving virtue.

More important, though, the findings show how the reframing of the capitalist logic of profitability into a logic of communion, in both cases, is happening as the future and the past are acted out in the present. This re-embedding of economic relations within social ones, could be described as eschatology breaking in through timespace activities. This means that the eschatological drive, the religiously motivated acting for something meaningful are aspects of the present activities. Furthermore, while the eschatological timespace is spread out in time and space, it cannot be separated from human activity.

Bretherton discusses how eschatology can break in through kairos. However, from his conceptual level, this seems to be a somewhat homeless eschatology.<sup>35</sup> The New Testament scholar Gerhard Lohfink has argued that the reign of God has its own kairos, its proper time, but it also has its own topos, its place. It is not, furthermore, argues Lohfink, “a u-topia, which means ‘no place, nowhere’” (Lohfink 2012, p. 40). While Bretherton talks about the importance of both time and space, he is emphasizing kairos and downplaying space. In his attempt to show how salvation cannot come from any economic project, such as capitalism, Bretherton emphasizes how salvation, “comes from ‘outside’ of chronological time and beyond human agency” (Bretherton 2019, p. 154). This seems to suggest an understanding of God’s activity as separated from human activity. We see how Bretherton in his political theology, talks about the importance of both time and space but focuses on and prioritizes kairos, which makes both space and human activity less important. This kind of downplaying of space, furthermore, might be a reason why work—which ought to play a fundamental role in a political theology for a capitalist economy—is given such little attention in *Christ and the Common Life* and becomes rather abstract. As this article

<sup>34</sup> In EoC, as a global movement; however, support of unions is an important statement.

<sup>35</sup> I am here referring to Gerhard Lohfink, who argues that the reign of God can be “handed over to impotence by being made homeless” (Lohfink 2012, p. 39).

shows, however, an analysis of timespace activity brings together theology and economy, salvation and everyday work, as it shows how human existence is primarily activity.

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