Journal of Religion and Business Ethics

Volume 5 *Shalom in Business* Article 4

12-31-2024

Shalom and Communion Through the Practice of Business

Andrew B. Gustafson
Creighton University, and Heider College of Buisness, andrewgustafson@creighton.edu

SHALOM AND COMMUNION THROUGH THE PRACTICE OF BUSINESS

Although I am a Protestant Christian, in this paper I will approach the concept of Shalom from a perspective informed by Catholic Social Thought, and particularly, as an entrepreneur who participates in the Economy of Communion (EoC) movement. The aim of this paper is to seek to support the project of seeking Shalom through business practices by suggesting EoC as a model. I will here bring the principles of the Economy of Communion as a vision and a means to practice business in a way which leads to Shalom. To engage in current discussions on shalom, I will first provide a brief account of Shalom in business from some of the existing literature. I will then explain the Economy of Communion approach. Finally, I will compare and contrast this EoC view of business with two prominent views, namely the BAM view (Russell 2009; Johnson 2009), and the Reformed view as described in Quatro (2014) and others, namely the business-as-business approach, supposedly derived from the separate spheres view of Kuyper (Baus 2006, Kuyper 2021). I will build on friendly criticisms from Quatro (2014) of the shortfalls of the BAM view of business, but argue-- pace Quatro (2014) and Weinberger (2010) --that the 'separate spheres' approach of Kuyper et al. should avoid appearing to promote a view of business which is akin to Albert Carr (1968) and popular representations of Milton Friedman's viewpoints—that business is business, and that it should not be directed or confused with one's religious or personal ethics. Rather, even if we accept a sovereign-spheres approach, not only should faith definitely speak into how we practice business towards shalom, but business itself can be an opportunity for spiritual practice which helps us to grow in our faith, and also to come into closer communion with others. Ultimately by doing so, we establish shalom, and I will provide a few concrete examples of how my own and other EoC companies attempt to achieve this end.

Ultimately, I suggest the EoC as a model to provide conceptual resources and practical examples to help bring about Shalom through communion which can happen if we pursue business as a means not only of economic flourishing but also of spiritual transformation. I will argue that there are some wonderful ways to achieve shalom through business practices which are aimed at pursuing communion between people, particularly as advocated through the economy of communion.

1. Shalom and Business

A. Shalom

There is a rich literature on the concept of shalom. Plantinga says shalom is the "webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in justice, fulfillment, and delight" (Plantinga, 2002, 14). Wolterstorff describes it as being in right relationship to God, others, and our environment (Wolterstorff, 1983, 70). Amy Sherman reiterates this, describing Shalom as capturing the notion of peace in our relationship with God, ourselves, others, and creation: "Shalom signifies spiritual, psychological, social and physical wholeness…Shalom is what we find in his original creation, and shalom is what will characterize the new heaven and new earth in his consummated Kingdom. Put another way, God designed us for flourishing" and she goes on to quote Art Lindsley that flourishing is simply "shalom in every direction, personal and public" (Sherman, 2022, 14). Cafferky has similarly suggested that the term prosperity means Shalom "if and only if what is intended is full prosperity in all of life's dimensions including life lived in love to God and love to each other" (Cafferky, 2014, 10).

In speaking of Shalom, Walter Bruggeman describes it as a harmony in which each person is concerned with the well being of others:

> The central vision of world history in the Bible is that all of creation is one, every creature in community with every other, living in harmony and security toward the joy and well-being of every other creature….Shalom is the substance of the biblical vision of one community embracing all of creation. It refers to all those resources and factors which make communal harmony joyous and effective" (Bruggeman, 1976, 15-16).

Shalom should apparently involve a harmonious unity of creation (God, self, all humans and all created) living in community, flourishing, and whole—restored to the full. We should seek to increase shalom in all realms. Perry Yoder says "Shalom defines how things should be…materially, relationally, and morally…there could be no shalom if things were not as they ought to be" (Yoder, 1997, 16-17). Shalom encompasses the physical and material well being of people and society, it also encompasses people's relationships with one another and God, and finally it encompasses a moral meaning as well—that things are being conducted with honesty and integrity, in a blameless manner.

It seems obvious that those who are already better off than others in terms of spiritual, social, and material resources are responsible to help bring shalom to

others who have less abilities or social and material capital. This is why Bruggeman says that "Shalom in a special way is the task and burden of the well-off and powerful. They are the ones held accountable for shalom" (Bruggeman, 1976, 21). And whether or not one is acting in Shalom can be judged in part by the fruit of actions. When it comes to trying to identify what practicing shalom looks like in the concrete, Smith et al. (2006) suggest it easiest to think of right relationships of Shalom in terms of their fruit—and that "those who live in proper relation to God, people and creation will leave the fruit of justice in their wake" (Bruggeman, 1976, 114).

B. Sphere Sovereignty and Shalom

Abraham Kuyper describes the Church's relationship to the market in the following way,

> The marketplace of the world, not the church, is the arena where we wrestle for the prize, the race track where we wage the contest for the wreath. Far from being the battlefield itself, the church is rather like the army tent of the Lord where soldiers strengthen themselves before that battle, where they treat their wounds after the battle, and where one who has become 'prisoner by the sword of the Word' is fed at the table of the Lord (Kuyper, 2013).

The marketplace is certainly distinct from the church, and they are separate and sovereign spheres. From a Reformed perspective, it seems that sphere sovereignty may be an essential aspect to shalom. Kuyper clearly explains sphere sovereignty as being a uniquely Reformed principle (we should note that he adds, "We do not thereby reject our Lutheran brethren. To look down on other Christians would be to our blame" (Kuyper, 1880, 480)). On Kuyper's explanation, the principle of freedom is displayed in how God has divided "life into separate spheres, each with its own sovereignty" and one can "Call the parts of this one great machine 'cogwheels,' spring-driven on their own axles, or 'spheres,' each animated with its own spirit" (Kuyper, 1880, 467). Naming some of them, Kuyper says "Just as we speak of a 'moral world,' a 'scientific world,' a 'business world,' the 'world of art,' so we can more properly speak of a 'sphere' of morality, of the family, of social life, each with its own domain" (Kuyper, 1880, 467). These spheres each having their own sovereignty, are the source of freedom—freedom of personal conscience from the state, freedom of education from the state, freedom of family from the state, etc. Of course, for Kuyper, God's sovereign rule extends over all of our lives, so all of the cultural spheres are *coram deo*, before the face of God. But each sphere has its own distinctive legitimate roles. Kuyper does think that the state has a threefold legitimate role in relation to the other spheres: recognition and support of

the spheres, and resolution of conflict (McIlroy, 2003, 754). Yet, the greatest threat to sphere sovereignty is the state, and on Kuyper's view, history is replete with examples of "Sphere sovereignty defending itself against State sovereignty" (1880, 469) and indeed his defense of sphere sovereignty is in large part to protect family, education, and other spheres of life from the encroachment of the state or church. (Kuyper 1880, 468-69).[1] Kuyper adds that there are realms or spheres of nature, of the personal, the household, of science, of social and ecclesiastical life, of logic, of conscience and of faith (1880, 467). Again, the state must not overreach into these realms.

In some sense, this balance of separation of various sovereign spheres is a fundamental condition for shalom, it seems. Goudzwaard described the balance of the various spheres of life in the following way: "Life in all its forms should have an own room or space to develop itself, according to the life-principles which God meant for that domain. All spheres of life together give a multicoloured answer to the one living Word of God" (Goudzwaard, 2011, 363). Goudzwaard recalls T.P van der Kooy's expression as the need for a "simultaneous realization of norms" and additionally that "The norms or ways of justice, love, human community, justice and *oikonomia* show namely a deep coherence. They should guide us together in a balanced way to the development of a wholesome human society" (Goudzwaard, 2011, 263).

But sphere sovereignty also raises a question—about the way in which one's spiritual pursuit of shalom should speak to one's business practices. Is such application of shalom to business itself a violation of sphere sovereignty? Is business to be practiced in a way which has its own rules, distinct from the rules and norms of church? Or is the application of Shalom an application of God's sovereign will to business? And how does that relate to the sovereign sphere of morality? Should my business life exemplify my Christian commitments, or should it remain sovereignly without distinctive Christian identity to pursue business as business? Kuyper is clear that Christ must reign in all dimensions of our life (including our business activities): "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry 'mine!'" (Kuyper, 1880: 488). And if pursuing shalom in business is the pursuit of a right ordering of my business practices in light of Christ's sovereignty, then it seems clear that pursuing shalom in business is not a violation of sphere sovereignty. There should be shalom among the spheres, but also shalom within

[1] Kuyper says in his essay on constitutional liberties: "Can it be denied that the centralizing State grows more and more into a gigantic monster over against which every citizen is finally powerless?" (Kuyper, 1873, 282) Undoubtedly he sees the state as the great threat to sovereign spheres, although he also cautions against denying the state its own proper authority.

each sphere. It seems clear that since our activities in every sphere are to be done as Christians—before the face of God-- evangelism and shalom should be the ways we live our faith in every sphere. Insofar as God is to reign in all aspects of our life, our faith should inform and so direct our business practices. Of course business will never perform the proper actions of church, for example the administration of the sacraments, the catechizing of youth and converts, worship, preaching of the Word, instruction / encouragement / discipline of members by the pastors and elders, or even the charitable ministries of mercy of the deacons. However, for us to live out the teachings of our faith in our business practices—to be concerned for the orphan, the widow or the stranger, for example[2]-- is neither an overstepping of the church into the sphere of business, nor, if we wish to live out our faith in business, it is also not an overstepping of the sphere of business into that of the church.

C. Examples of Shalom in Business

There have been some attempts to flesh out what shalom in business looks like. As Jason Stansbury has pointed out, "Such peace [shalom] is not merely a lack of conflict, but rather entails a set of dispositions, actions, and relationships conducive to individual and collective thriving" (Stansbury 2018, 32). Among the virtues required by businesspeople for such thriving are prudence, diligence, thrift, integrity and generosity (Stansbury, 2018, 32). Phillips and Phillips (2021) provide some concrete attempts to describe what Shalom would look like in the workplace. Again relying on Wolterstorff, they point out that Shalom involves enjoyment of one's relationships. Practically, Phillips and Phillips claim that

> employees who seek to live in harmony with God should reduce their employers' expenses when compared to those who do not by: minimizing losses due to theft and pilferage, reducing the frequency of timecard theft and fraudulent insurance claims, engaging in acts of encouragement and support (organizational citizenship behaviors), which are associated with positive organizational financial outcomes: working diligently, as if laboring directly for God (Col. 3:23); carrying their own loads, while also sharing the burdens of others around them (Gal. 6:2-5) and exhibiting virtues

[2] We know that there are many directives in the Bible directly related to living out our faith through our business practices. One clear example from the Old Testament is the requirement of gleaning—that farmers should leave some grain for the poor and for foreigners: "When you reap the harvest of your land, don't reap the corners of your field or gather the gleanings. Leave them for the poor and the foreigners. I am GOD, your God" Leviticus 23:22

> such as diligence and integrity that promote organizational thriving and improve customer service (Phillips & Phillips, 2021, 22).

This list of concrete actions of shalom here seem to indicate primarily ethical behavior outcomes—in line with Stansbury-- that people who practice shalom act with integrity, diligence, and other like virtues. As for the notion of a company culture pursuing a peaceful work environment, Phillips and Phillips point out the benefits to a company which has such peacefully coexisting workers: Management and labor will coexist and prosper, rather than resorting to hostility and conflict, teams will function better, turf wars will recede, conflicts will be resolved productively and managers won't pit employees against each other (Phillips, 2021, 23). While all of these ethical principles and practices are useful, it doesn't seem that they are particularly distinctive. If they arise from a Shalom-mindset, how are they different from secular theories? Many theories of management not rooted in shalom (or even religious principles of any sort) would advocate for most all of these behaviors (not stealing, pursuing peace in the workplace, diligence, integrity, etc) and would identify such behaviors as helping strengthen company culture and providing positive benefits.

Perhaps more interesting (although again, not particularly rooted distinctively in shalom) Phillips and Phillips highlight the thinking of Greenleaf as a mindset of those managers who live out shalom. Such managers ask: "Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived" (Greenleaf, 1970). (Phillips, 2021, 23)

In an attempt to highlight the distinctives of a Shalom approach, by considering the economic mindset of those seeking shalom in contrast to the typical wealth-pursuit mindset, Yoder contrasts the economics of shalom and the economics of wealth as follows (111; 126-27).

TABLE 1

Principles	Economics of Shalom	Wealth Economics
1. Ownership of subsistence resources	God owns, people use	People own, exclude rights of others
2. Access to resources	Open; gleaning, sabbatical laws	Closed, exclusive rights to owner; concentration of resources

3. Consumption	Based on need; wants balanced by surplus	Based on self-aggrandizement
4. Distribution Mechanisms	Unbalanced reciprocity; based on need—from the haves to the have-nots	Exchange for gain, based on getting more than giving; flow from have-nots to haves
5. Basic Outlook	There is enough, trust and reliance on God	Scarcity, so hoard; security is in saving for the future
6. Basic Value	Affluence is measured by leisure over against work for subsistence	Affluence is based on having more than others
7. Disposition of Surplus	To those in need	Accumulate to support separate classes
8. Goal	Finite; the subsistence of all	Infinite; wealth, people never have enough
9. Results	Stewardship of resources; Justice, no needy or oppressed; Minimal force needed to maintain the system	Exploitation of resources; Class separation; wealth in the midst of poverty; oppression and increasing force to maintain class separation

While Phillips and Phillips view of shalom in business seems to be very business oriented, and in this sense views business as a sovereign sphere, it seems that Yoder applies the Christian biblical principles directly onto business and economics. It is not clear that he respects the sovereign sphere of business in doing so in a very strict sense. For example, promoting gleaning would seem to imply that businesses should leave some of their own surplus for the poor, not simply give it to stockholders to make their own decisions about how to share their wealth. The stewardship approach seeking to provide for the needs of the neediest seems to also apply Church views of caring for the poor on the corporation. But as we pointed out earlier, this need not be seen as out of line with a sovereign spheres approach to business, since Kuyper clearly thinks business is under the sovereignty of Christ and "before the face of God" (*coram Deo*), and so business should be practiced with Biblical commands and concerns guiding decisions. Yoder gives us some clear ideas of how a Shalom approach is distinctive from traditional business-mindset- economics.

I would like to now consider the EoC approach, which I believe provides an authentic, practical and distinctive way to practice business which exemplifies the shalom approach to business.

2. Economy of Communion

A. My Introduction to the Economy of Communion (EoC)

The Economy of Communion is an ecumenical organization of entrepreneurs and their supporters who envision business as a means to transform culture and society—in fact the entire economy—for good, particularly helping the poor (Lubich, 2020). It was begun in 1991 in Sao Paulo Brazil when Chiara Lubich, head of the Focolare (a Catholic lay-people spiritual organization) discovered that many of their members were living in severe poverty (Bruni and Uelman, 2006). She asked the local leadership what could be done, and they brainstormed the idea of creating viable businesses which would give the poor in their midst opportunity to make a living with jobs, helping them become self-sustaining. There were three essential tasks which were distinctive:

> 1.Contribute to a fair economic system by using profits to promote development programs and by starting companies with goals beyond profit-making. These companies should split their profit into three parts in order to help the poor, create new jobs in the company, and promote the "culture of giving."
> 2. Create jobs, foster productive inclusion, and support community development (poverty means above all exclusion from productivity, the community, and society).
> 3. Fight extreme poverty and promote a new "culture of giving." (Bruni, 2014, 17)

Today there are over 750 EoC companies worldwide, and they live out their faith and values through the way they practice business. Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis have all supported the EoC.

The EoC exemplifies a lot of the Catholic social thought principles, which in my opinion are Christian, not specifically Catholic, at root. Many of these principles live in a healthy tension with one another, for example, dignity of each individual is respected, while at the same time the common good of all is seen to be an essential goal to pursue. Subsidiarity, by which each person and level of society (family, local government, central government) each have their respective responsibilities which they should distinctively be allowed to pursue and fulfill, and solidarity, which claims that we should all seek to support one another and be in

unity (Naughton et al, 2015). There are rights and responsibilities each person has for themselves and towards others, and there is a special preference for the poor—calling us to pay special care and attention to the orphan, the widow, the stranger, and anyone who is lacking.

Some of my personal background will help frame the EoC. When I first came to my current academic job, I bought a house in a depressed neighborhood nearby as my home. Then I bought another, and another until I had 34 buildings which I eventually have fixed up. I loved working with my hands, I loved the challenge of completing projects, and I really loved the renovating work involved—bringing dilapidated houses or buildings which most saw as hopeless back from the brink of being torn down by the city, and turning them into beautiful, very livable homes for people again.

But this initial desire to restore old houses and buildings developed and was enriched with time. While at first I simply enjoyed rehabilitating old buildings in which others saw no hope, and bringing them back to life, eventually I began to see this work as a work of redemption, an imitation of God who sees hope where others see hopelessness. I am not a theologian, but I started to view this renovation work as lived practical theology-- a very small imitation of God's redemptive work in the world: God reaches out and gives grace and acts in faith to restore people seen as hopeless by the rest of the world. Many of the buildings I bought were seen as hopeless causes, perhaps better to be torn down than restored. At first I considered primarily the buildings we were renovating as redemptive works, but as I worked in our neighborhood, I began to get to know a variety of characters, many of them homeless or near homeless, and many of them with addictions of one sort or another.

I soon discovered that I lived in a neighborhood where many people lived who could use work—some homeless, some semi-homeless, and many with various issues holding them back from normal full time work. I began to employ them—one Native American who had spent years living on the streets, another former mason who was currently living in his truck—and so the crew grew. And as I began to get to know them, and they helped me and I helped them, I found that their friendship was a blessing to me in ways I would not have expected (Gustafson, 2024). I also found that I really enjoyed interacting with tenants and getting to know them and help them, sometimes through difficult times such as a job layoff or other financial strain. We rented to a variety of people, but we at times took on renters others may not—sex offenders, people coming out of jail, and certainly people with bad credit or other difficulties. I felt that we could, through our business, provide a safety net for people and a way into housing which otherwise

would be challenging. It wasn't easy, and it was sometimes messy to take on these buildings, workers, and tenants.

In 2015 I first encountered the Economy of Communion, a worldwide group of entrepreneurs who attempt to bring about communion by the way that they practice business. There are many types of entrepreneurs and companies which are run according to economy of communion principles (Gallagher and Buckeye, 2014). They range from travel tour company to geological surveyor, management consultant to CEO of a software development company, to president of a hardware installation company. Some have made violins, others run a pharmacy, and still another makes films. I found the EoC after I had been buying, fixing up, and renting out houses and apartments for over a decade. When I met the EoC entrepreneurs, I found people who saw Providence in their business practices and decisions—God at work. These entrepreneurs sought to treat their employees as fully human and desired to bring unity not only to their workplace, but to the world around them through the way they interacted with others and conducted business—especially the poor. They were well respected by their competitors (and would sometimes send their competitors business if they were too busy), they would encourage their employees to go take jobs at other firms if they felt it was best for that person (even if that would be a hardship for their own company), and they went out of their way to help employees and customers in difficult situations, even if it wasn't the most efficient or cost-effective decision for their company. In short, they were choosing to value people over profit for the sake of communion and their spiritual calling, and saw this as an extension of the grace of God to others. Gratuity was the first principle, and reciprocity was typically the response which came back to them (Guitian, 2010, 290). But the gratuity is not dependent on the reciprocity—it is not a quid pro quo expectation, and if reciprocity is not provided, they would continue in the next instance to act with gratuity towards others, hoping to build communion not only in their firm or with their customers, but as a general goal for the economy and society at large. In this sense then, one who practices Economy of Communion values is a purveyor of unmerited unwarranted grace after the image and example of Jesus Christ.

B. Principles/Features of the Economy of Communion Practices which lead to Shalom

Linda Sprecht has pointed out, "The EoC developed from a charism, not from economic or business theory. Unlike many business or economic models that are founded in theory and must be tested in the 'real world', the inspiration for the EoC project emerged from a lived spirituality, and was immediately brought to life in the 'real world'…" (Sprecht 2008) The EoC was different, because it brings its "spirituality into the market economy" (Bruni, 2002). The Economy of

Communion model has been demonstrated worldwide for more than 30 years, so it provides a set of concrete business activities to consider. As we noted previously, Stansbury has pointed out that the peace of shalom "is not merely a lack of conflict, but rather entails a set of dispositions, actions, and relationships conducive to individual and collective thriving" (Stansbury 2018, 32). I will here provide 10 features/principles of EoC practices which underlie the dispositions, actions and relationships-- as EoC conceives of them-- which I think provide a solid foundation for business to help foster shalom:

1. Business as a Spiritual Practice
2. Beyond Charity Model: Business Itself as Means of Help
3. Business Supporting the Common Good (Intended and Unintended)
4. Addressing Many Types of Poverty through Business (Not Just Financial)
5. Practicing Business to Transform Society and Economy
6. Beyond Quid Pro Quo: An Economy of Gift and Love?
7. Beyond Merit: Business as Opportunity for Grace
8. Beyond "Just Business, Nothing Personal": Sharing in the Messiness and Wounds of others
9. Beyond "Human Resources": Business as Opportunity for Human Development/Flourishing
10. Overcoming a Divided Life

2B1. Business as a Spiritual Practice

Typically when we think of 'faith and business' we consider what faith has to say to business. And this is important. If we apply our faith and the teachings of scripture to our business practices, it will certainly affect the way we practice business. But what the EoC suggests is that, when our business practices begin to be informed by our faith, then our business practices themselves help nourish our faith itself. When my business practices begin to be directed by and towards the gospel, then my business activity can begin to be spiritual activity as well. Pope Francis, when speaking to a group of EoC entrepreneurs in 2017 at the Vatican said,

> Business is not only incapable of destroying communion among people, but can edify it; it can promote it. With your life you demonstrate that economy and communion become more beautiful when they are beside each other. Certainly the economy is more beautiful, but communion is also more beautiful, because the spiritual communion of hearts is even fuller when it becomes the communion of goods, of talents, of profits (Pope Francis, 2017).

When we begin to see business as a means to bring about communion between people, and see the way we practice business as a way in which we can edify others and help them become more fully what God intends, and make things right in the world through our business activities, then business itself becomes an avenue for us to grow in our faith, to practice and live out our faith, and to establish shalom.

2B2. Beyond Charity Model: Business Itself as Means of Help

Many people consider business as a means to make money, which they can then use to help others through charity. This is the Rockefeller model—make a lot of money, then help others with the money. But a different model is to consider how you can help people through the very practice of your business activities in the first place. The Economy of Communion is not a philosophy of simply charity/sharing money, it is a vision of using business to help provide jobs and build community and to help people intentionally through private enterprise– not just financially, but in terms of community, dignity, respect, and fellowship. Through the practices of business-- not just through its profits-- we help bring about communion. As mentioned previously, EoC was initially begun in Sao Paulo, Brazil as a project to help those who were poor to have jobs to provide the dignity of them earning their own sustenance. It was not a project to make money to give to charity for these people, but to create a means for them to have dignified work and be fully human-- creating the means of bringing people into full communion in society by way of providing opportunities for them to be fully human through work and providing for themselves. This involves commitment and connection to the poor in a way which is not common. As Pope Francis said, "Capitalism knows philanthropy, not communion. It is simple to give a part of the profits, without embracing and touching the people who receive those 'crumbs'. .... In the logic of the Gospel, if one does not give all of himself, he never gives enough of himself" (Pope Francis 2017). This is gratuitous in a different sort of way. Entrepreneurs, in practicing business in a more gratuitous way, use private enterprise itself to help "correct the unjust and wrong distribution of goods" (Andringa 2010). This is distinct from the typical model by which entrepreneurs accumulate wealth in order to distribute it via third-party charities and nonprofits.

Rather than a simple charity model, which sees business as a positive means to accumulate wealth to give to charity to help the orphan, the widow, and the stranger, the EoC entrepreneur is called to try to eliminate the business practices which can lead to there being victims, by practicing business in a different way. Business is itself the solution, not the means to wealth which can then charitably help out. As Lorna Gold points out, "The EoC was not simply about making profits to share with the poor, but applying the Focolare spirituality in the business, which

meant 'humanizing' economic structures, starting with the business as the basic unit of economic activity" (Gold, 2010, 129). There is a wide-ranging aim here, by which the EoC movement hopes to actually work within the free market system to transform the economy itself and so, impact culture and society itself through business. Pope Francis highlights the irony of business sectors which "produce discarded people whom it would then like to care for" highlighting both the tobacco industry and gambling industry, which simultaneously market damaging products and then have campaigns to help those whom they have harmed (cancer support or gambling support). Here corporate charity is aimed at problems that the corporations themselves caused. In contrast to this, the solution of the Economy of Communion is to create less victims who then need aid! EoC "must not only care for the victims, but build a system where there are ever fewer victims…As long as the economy still produces one victim and there is still a single discarded person, communion has not yet been realized;…" (Pope Francis, 2017). Ultimately, we must not only care for today's victims, but try to curtail those of tomorrow.

In our own case, Communion Properties 'cuts out the charity middle-man' by simply charging less for rent than what is common. If you consider our average rents in comparison to the average rents for Omaha, it turns out that we charge more than 20,000 per month less than the average rent, or nearly a quarter of a million dollars per year (figures from 2023):

TABLE 2

Type of Property	Average Omaha Rent	Our Average
Studio	$675	$375-540
1 BR	$775	$450-550
2 BR	$927	$700
3 BR House	$1,600	$800-1100
4 BR	$2000+	$1200-1500

This obviously means we make less than we could. It also provides grace to our tenants, by forgoing some profit. There is surplus from any successful business—typically in the form of profit. The question is, how do you use it? The Economy of Communion model proposes sharing profits, especially with the poor, for the common good, and this can happen in many ways. The traditional model of generous businesses is to make profit, then donate that surplus as charity. But it is also possible to run your business so as not to have as much remaining surplus by running your business with more intentional grace, for the benefit of others. As mentioned above, we charge lower rates (20-50% less) on apartments and houses here locally than the median local rate (and so have many tenants who have been in the same place for 5+ years). This provides financial stability and home stability

for them. What this means in our case is that on a monthly basis we take in about $22,000 less than we would if we charged the median rent rate for our town. Now of course that means we run on much tighter margins, because we pay the same taxes and insurance rates and utility costs as any normal landlord. Additionally, we also take more financial risk by renting to tenants who may not meet typical credit or income requirements, and we frequently provide grace and stability/security when people fall behind, allowing them to catch up over time (one tenant has lost her jobs 4 times, and we have let her stay giving her opportunity to catch up again). These decisions are about surplus — not after the fact decisions about how to 'spend our profit'-- but rather, decisions made to limit our profits. We make less, risk more, and typically take on the burden of financial and other messes that tenants leave us with, by choice. These are choices we make about how to run our business in a way which helps others, rather than attempting to make as much money as possible, and then giving some away through charity.[3] This is a concrete, sacrificial, and practical way to practice shalom as Cafferky expresses it, as "life lived in love to God and love to each other" (Cafferky, 2014, 10).

2B3. Business Supporting the Common Good (Intended and Unintended)

The Roman Catholic Catechism defines the Common Good as: "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily" (Catechism, 1906). On this view, whatever helps people to be more fully human and to live in a more flourishing way contributes to the common good. An EoC entrepreneur will frequently consider the ways in which they contribute to the well being and flourishing of others through their business. For example, Communion Properties provides for financial benefit, freedom, and other privileges of a variety of stakeholders through our business activities:

[3] Our business is unique in that we are providing housing to many in need. But one could imagine other sorts of companies helping the less fortunate, while lowering their business profit margin. A financial advisor could make sure to have 10% of their clients be low-wealth clients, or tax accountants could spend one afternoon per week during tax season providing free service to the poor, a subcontractor could spend two workdays a volunteering for Habitat for Humanity, and the restaurant owner could provide free meals at Thanksgiving and Christmas for the homeless, etc. etc.

TABLE 3

	Financial	Freedom	Privileges
Tenants	Rent savings Gracious / Flexible	From ownership (not their leak)	Decent housing at a low price
Workers	Money Loans Gracious	To drive To purchase To create & decide	Work, Faithfulness Housing, Eat out Social capital, Safety net
Subcontractors	Money Loans	Flexible "boss"	Safety net
Neighbors	Prop values up		Better houses Better neighbors
Society	Tax revenues Low priced housing	Less public housing required	Better houses Good citizens Public school revenue

There are of course ways any business helps the common good—by providing valuable goods and services, at a reasonable price, providing employment, paying taxes, etc. But then there are other more intentional ways in which one can choose to help society—like by employing those otherwise not very employable, providing grace to tenants, taking on tenants who otherwise would have difficulty renting, provide support and security for employees, providing below-market priced housing, etc. These practices take an intentional commitment and determined follow through as you make business decisions. This intentionality to seek the well being of others is a pursuit of shalom through business.

2B4. Addressing Many Types of Poverty through Business (Not Just Financial)

Pope Francis has said "Capitalism knows philanthropy, not communion" (Francis, 2017). This communion is especially communion with the poor. Since it originated in Sao Palo in 1991, the EOC has envisioned business as a means to help the poor, to be with the poor, and to bring the poor into the circle of communion, not simply to give them money or resources. At the core of EOC business practice is a faith-inspired intention to make the world better for those in need through helping them to enter the market and participate, with dignity and entering into communion with others in this way (Crivelli 2020, Gustafson 2020). This free-market private-enterprise approach of responding to poverty was very attractive to me, because it seemed sustainable-- not dependent on donor charity or government handouts. In this way, EOC businesses share at least one similar point with Prahalad's bottom of the pyramid thesis (Prahalad, 2005), and as films like "Poverty Inc" help to show—that the poor can be helped (frequently helped more) by market participation, rather than simply charity (Poverty Inc., 2015).

But this focus on the way business can lead to communion is not just a matter of helping provide dignity to the poor by helping them enter the market as participants. As noted above, it is a whole different vision of seeing business as a spiritual enterprise:

> Business is not only incapable of destroying communion among people, but can edify it; it can promote it. With your life you demonstrate that economy and communion become more beautiful when they are beside each other. Certainly the economy is more beautiful, but communion is also more beautiful, because the spiritual communion of hearts is even fuller when it becomes the communion of goods, of talents, of profits" (Pope Francis, 2017).

Rather than seeing our faith as something which should direct us in how to conduct our business (honestly, uprightly, with integrity, etc.) this vision sees business itself as something which can leaven our spirituality—as we see our business practices as a means to live out our spirituality and even to grow in our faith as we live it out.

A solution which focuses only on the financial needs of an individual rests ultimately on a very thin anthropology, and does not meet the needs of human beings in the fullness of their complexity as children of God. The economy of communion recognizes that there are varieties of human poverty, of which monetary poverty is one type. Addressing the inequities of poverties is an important aspect of establishing shalom-- shalom in the sense that Sherman had defined it above, insofar as it "signifies spiritual, psychological, social and physical wholeness" (Sherman, 2022, 14). In working with homeless or others on the fringes, an important poverty we address is the poverty of community, and lack of belonging. Another is a poverty of project. Human beings like projects, we like to work and accomplish something, and work provides the condition for the possibility of that fulfillment. Once one finds some community and has regular work, another form of poverty is overcome—a poverty of purpose. If someone asks 'what do you do?' they are typically asking what work you do, but they are also asking at some level what you do in society—what purpose to you fulfill for society, and what is your place here. When one finds a sense of purpose through work and community, the existential poverty of meaninglessness can begin to be addressed as well. And in many cases I find that this eventually starts to address a spiritual poverty, and many who work with us begin to feel that there is a purpose and order—even a providence—in the world, and that God is watching out for them. Seeing your business as a means to help address these multiple poverties is a way you can see shalom-making as part of business itself.

2B5. Practicing Business to Transform Society and Economy

EoC seeks not just to make business responsible, or ethical, or even to help us be more kind in business. It seeks to transform society and to renew the economy itself with a different way of thinking about human interactions in business which I believe is very much in line with Shalom thinking. As Bruni and Hejj point out,

> Rather than concentrating on the need to make businesses more ethical or more humane, the EoC is based on the need to do our part to build a more just world, one where fewer people are forced to live in often inhumane conditions. This is why it cannot and should not become a corporate-social-responsibility project. It did not come about to renew businesses, but to renew social relations (Bruni and Hejj 2011, 378).

Typically, EoC entrepreneurs are motivated by a larger-than-their-business aim to help bring about a transformation of how business is done, of what participating in the economy can look like. They see business as a powerful means to transform society itself by presenting counter-cultural practices which have a more humane and more gracious motive. The goal of EoC companies is to "help to create a society that is more civil due to the fact that they are directly involved in combating poverty while being not only a productive structure but also by promoting new humanistic management" (Esteso-Blasco et al., 2018, 90). Insofar as EoC practices seek to renew social relations, create a more civil society and combat poverty through business, they are pursuing shalom through business. This vision of business practice exemplifies the vision of shalom presented by Brueggemann, in which "every creature in community with every other, living in harmony and security toward the job and well-being of every other creature….Shalom is the substance of the biblical vision of one community embracing all of creation. It refers to all those resources and factors which make communal harmony joyous and effective" (Brueggemann, 1976, 15-16).

2B6. Beyond Quid Pro Quo: An Economy of Gift and Love?

Love is not something we typically associate with economics, which tends to be skeptical of such sentiments and considers love inefficient. As Andringa has put it, "Economics has focused on the sphere of human life in which love can be avoided and considers that the more the market is able to cut down on 'love', the more efficient it will be" and additionally, "love requires the gift to be free, unconditional, which is a scandal for economics, which believes a price must be attributed to everything" (Andringa 2004). As Andringa sees things, love is the

motivation for the EoC entrepreneur to practice business with a focus on gift and giving grace. In general, business itself is considered to be acquisitive—acquiring more wealth, as a successful company grows. But the founder of EoC said that "Unlike the consumer economy based on a culture of having, the Economy of Communion is the economy of giving" (Lubich, 2020). This certainly undermines the traditional expectation for a reliable quid pro quo in economic exchange. The gift may be reciprocated, but that is not the expectation or the motivation for giving. The motivation is love.

EoC entrepreneurs find meaning through their business practices in the gift-giving and love they can show others through business practices. This makes business activities much more meaningful and fulfilling. As John Mundel, prominent EoC North American entrepreneur says, "Joy—this is the gift the EoC gives! It is the happiness, well-being and deep satisfaction that comes from living a meaningful life integrated with our most heartfelt beliefs and resulting from the relationships that grow out of this giving and receiving" (Mundell, 2014, xvi). This is reminiscent of Plantinga's point that shalom entails the "webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in justice, fulfillment, and delight" (Plantinga, 2002, 14). The EoC entrepreneur finds fulfillment and satisfaction in living out this stance of giving through one's business activities. It becomes essential to one's being: "EoC isn't a matter of being generous, of giving charity; it isn't philanthropy or merely a way of providing assistance. It has to do with acknowledging and living the dimension of giving and giving of oneself as essential to one's own existence" (Araujo, 2002, 23) Seeing business as an opportunity for giving of oneself in the very way that one engages others in business activities, and integrating one's desire for mutual relationships with the way one is generous in business, is a shalom mindset for business.

2B7. Beyond Merit: Business as Opportunity for Grace

Merit is a fundamental tenet of business logic, particularly with regard to treatment of employees. Typically in business, pay is merited, and performance is rewarded. It would be imprudent and foolish to let an employee fail repeatedly and still offer them grace. It would be unwise from a typical business perspective to hire people who are less stable or less reliable, much less to provide service for those who are unreliable. Yet EoC entrepreneurs frequently do this, because they see their practices as an opportunity to practice grace and look beyond merit, as a reflection of the unmerited grace we all receive from God. It is useful to hear Pope Francis' challenge to EoC entrepreneurs, drawing from the story of the Prodigal Son:

> For communion one must imitate the merciful Father of the parable of the Prodigal Son and wait at home for the children, workers and coworkers who have done wrong, and there embrace them and celebrate with and for them — and not be impeded by the meritocracy invoked by the older son and by many who deny mercy in the name of merit. An entrepreneur of communion is called to do everything possible so that even those who do wrong and leave home can hope for work and for dignified earnings, and not wind up eating with the swine. No son, no man, not even the most rebellious, deserves acorns" (Francis, 2017).

Most of my day to day helpers, especially at the beginning, were homeless, alcoholics, or both. While they could and did help me a lot, they also had frequent failings and let me down on many occasions. Those disappointments were part of the cost of choosing to put faith in those people. And more often than not they did not let me down, but they did let me down more often than typical stable employees. But choosing to be gracious and merciful many times was a choice to not simply think in terms of merit. This graciousness is a part of helping to establish shalom through business.

As Brueggemann says, "Shalom in a special way is the task and burden of the well-off and powerful. They are the ones held accountable for shalom" (Brueggemann, 1976, 21). We, the owners of companies who decide when to hire and fire have this burden, and we are accountable for shalom, and because of this burden of responsibility, we should seriously consider when grace should trump merit as the basis of our decisions. As we use the abundant resources we have to help others who perhaps do not entirely merit the assistance, we practice the gap-filling grace of shalom.

2B8 Beyond "Just Business, Nothing Personal": Sharing in the Messiness and Wounds of Others

There is a very real personal cost (not just financial) to practicing business this way. When we do practice business in a more personally-involved way informed by EoC values, taking on and even sharing the burdens and difficulties of our tenants and our workers as our own, we practice business in a way which may not be considered "professional" in traditional business thinking. We are familiar with the saying "the business of business is business" as well as the saying "it's just business, it is nothing personal" and in proper context, these statements both make perfect sense. But as Bruni has pointed out, oftentimes our business policies and procedures—our professionalism—are protective shields to keep us from personal

interaction with others which may lead to wounds. In doing so, we also avoid the possible blessings of those relationships with real human beings. We treat the person as simply an individual with a particular credit score, or a potential employee with a particular background concern. Business is notoriously meritocratic and impersonal. But this fails to provide gratuity (grace). Business provides many opportunities to provide grace to people. The EoC way of doing business is more complicated. It involves getting personally involved in the personal problems, messiness of the lives of our tenants and workers, and accepting those as our own.

We frequently find ourselves paying the price of our tenants' bad decisions, or accepting being the 'last to be paid' so that they can take care of other expenses first. At times, we take a chance on someone who is a risk, and we end up getting burned. Our employees frequently are living on the edge of poverty and find themselves in predicaments which we help them to solve. In these ways we often 'fill the gap' and help bring about peace for others through our business practices. Again, as Bruggeman says, those in power have a special responsibility to establish shalom, and we who have the resources are uniquely situated to help those who are struggling to maintain stability. In taking on their burdens and messes as our own we help establish shalom.

2B9 Beyond "Human Resources": Business as Opportunity for Human Development/Flourishing

Many businesses and many industries consider human beings much as they do other resources like steel, oil, coal, bauxite, or lumber. Resources are meant to be used efficiently to create value. Humans conceived of as 'human resources' likewise are seen as something to be utilized efficiently. But when business proceeds according to this mindset, it does not make business more human, but much less human. In contrast, Michael Naughton and coauthors point out,

> Business, if it is to be a humanizing influence in society, must be rooted in a cultural soil that draws upon the graces that can structure business towards authentic human development. Without such an embedded reality, business eventually defaults to a narrow form of instrumental rationality focused only on efficiency and profitability. EoC businesses stand as evidence that an integration of deep culture and business, of faith and work, are possible (Naughton et al., 2014: xiii).

EoC seeks to intentionally bring about harmony, and it establishes habits and even a culture which offers grace, and is motivated by a desire to promote human flourishing through the work offered to employees, and the products and services provided to customers.

The EoC seeks to treat workers with dignity—providing as much autonomy as possible for them to thrive. This comes from the Catholic social thought principle of subsidiarity. Michael Naughton *et al* have recently described subsidiarity in the following way:

> The word 'subsidiarity' comes from the Latin subsidium, that is, 'to assist and strengthen' the other. Within organizations, subsidiarity serves as a moral principle that directs leaders to place decision-making at the most appropriate level of an organization so as to utilize the gifts of employees for their own good, the good of the organization, and the good of the organization's clients or customers (Naughton et al., 2014: 1-2).

Helping employees to thrive and reach their full potential, in part by supporting their autonomy and freedom, is at the heart of subsidiarity. As Guitian puts it "Subsidiarity is the respect for freedom and aid received in order to allow development, but it is also a call to responsibility, commitment, involvement, and surrender one's self-potential and become a help to others" (Guitian, 2010, 279). It does seem that following the principle of subsidiarity will be an important part of maintaining shalom within the workplace—providing appropriate role recognition and letting decisions be made at the highest level necessary but lowest level possible, thereby empowering employees to be fully human and respecting their dignity.

2B10 Overcoming a Divided Life

Business is often practiced without connection to one's deep personal convictions and values, leading to a divided life. As it says in the "Vocation of the Business Leader", "Dividing the demands of one's faith from one's work in business is a fundamental error that contributes to much of the damage done by businesses in our world today…" (Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, 2018). This is because when one practices business without letting those decisions be informed by one's faith commitments, and one's personal values, business becomes soulless, unethical, and devoid of values. In contrast, EoC promotes living an integrated life. As Pope Francis has said, "You [EOC] see the entrepreneur as an agent of communion. By introducing into the economy the good

seed of communion, you have begun a profound change in the way of seeing and living business" (Pope Francis, 2017). When our commitment to live out our faith and personal values informs and directs our business practices in the ways we are describing, we experience an integrated life, and we experience the "spiritual, psychological, social and physical wholeness..." which is how Amy Sherman describes shalom (Sherman, 2022, 14). As we help others to see this integrated way of living out one's deeply held spiritual commitments via business, we help spread the possibility of shalom to the entire enterprise of business.

3. Comparing EoC to BAM and A Sovereign Spheres Business-as-Business Approach: Business as Mission as a Means to Shalom, and Its Relation to EoC

3A The BAM approach

One movement seeking to identify a distinctively Christian approach to business has been the Business as Mission movement. The Business and Mission (BAM) movement is broad ranging, and many different conceptions of it exist. Building on R. Paul Stevens work, Mark Russell has delineated seven existing paradigms of BAM:

1. **Business and mission**—two separate activities.
2. **Business for mission** – funding mission through the profits of business.
3. **Mission in business**—seeking to lead unbelieving employees to faith in Christ.
4. **Business as a platform for mission**—work and professional life as a means of channeling mission throughout the world.
5. **Business in missions**—business as a means to proclaim Christ in cross-cultural settings.
6. **Business as a cover for missions**—business as a means simply to obtain a visa. No real business is actually operated.
7. **Business as mission**—business as a vehicle of the mission of God in the world" (Russell, 2010, 22-23).

Russell identifies (#3) Mission in Business, (#5) Business in Missions, and (#6) Business as a cover for missions as "Church Planting and Evangelism" models specifically—where the goal is primarily spiritual conversion. In contrast to this spiritual-only focus, Russell suggests that there are four distinct areas of brokenness which God is on mission to heal: 1. Economic (abundance), 2. Relationships, 3. Creation, and 4. Spiritual (Russell, 2010, 16). While some see the BAM movement to be about using business to 'win souls to Christ' (spiritual focused), Russell thinks that (#7) Business as mission is the most wholistic and complete way to think of BAM. God can use our actions in business to display faith and love, producing real change and reconciliation to a broken world. Russell describes shalom as "a worldview where all things function in harmony" and it "covers every area of life" (Russell, 2010, 47). Russell goes on to say, "Business as mission reflects a desire for the kingdom of God to be manifested in a substantive way in the present age. When business fulfills its spiritual mission it can contribute significantly to creating economic shalom for many of the world's peoples" (Russell, 2010, 49). It seems that Russell's view of the way business can bring about shalom is useful, and avoids the sometimes narrow focus of some other versions of BAM. He points out that there are missionaries who want to use business in various ways to legitimize or gain access to help bring about conversions—which is what they see ultimately (and narrowly) as their 'mission'. On the other hand, Russell points out that business people who see business as mission have a different motivation, as well as a different view of what the mission is. BAM business professionals tend to see the fields of mission and business as integrated—business, and the way business is practiced is the mission. In terms of motivation, business professionals tend to be motivated to integrate business and mission in order to engage their own passions, use their skills, and to create jobs and make an impact to help the poor and overcome injustice (Russell, 2010, 161). It seems to me that the Economy of Communion maps well onto Russell's general view of BAM, and perhaps provides a helpful resource for best practices for those wishing to bring about Shalom through business.

3B The Business as Business Approach

In contrast to Russell, Quatro provides a substantial critique of the BAM movement from a reading of the reformed Christian tradition, particularly sphere sovereignty. While he applauds the BAM movement's work motivating "the business academic and practitioner communities to think intentionally about business" and he appreciates that BAM "recognizes the pervasive impact that business has on God's world, as they sound a clarion call for business to be conducted in ways that bring good to society" (Quatro, 2012, 80). Nevertheless, Quatro thinks BAM reinforces the false sacred/secular dichotomy by positioning BAM as more sacred than business as business, which leads to a dual-class

citizenship. Quatro, who (in our view wrongly) claims to hold to a sovereign spheres approach, thinks BAM improperly imposes the mandate for church onto business (asking business to do missional work) and it also undermines the proper function of business, namely to make profit. Lastly, Quatro thinks that BAM with its focus on evangelization via business can seem to lack full disclosure and have mixed motives (one can imagine a customer who says "I just wanted a new muffler, not to be proselytized to!") (Quatro, 2012, 81). In contrast to BAM, Quatro envisions a 'business-as-business' model:

> Christian business practitioners have before them the quite remarkable task of exercising dominion in the world. Thus, business professionals are afforded ultimate task significance in that through their work they image God and contribute to the upholding and on-going unfolding of his creation, and to the continued revelation of His kingdom, thereby loving Him with all their hearts, souls and minds. In this vein, certainly the practice of business serves as a key conduit through which the needs of our neighbors are effectively met. For example, when people around the globe or around the corner are praying earnestly for their daily 'bread,' the business professionals at Sara Lee, as well as at the local smalltown bakery are already hard at work baking, distributing and retailing that 'bread' (Quatro, 2012, 83).

Quatro claims he adheres to the above-mentioned sovereign spheres approach, rooted in Kuyper, "that economic life, family life, civic life, school life, and even church life are distinct and sovereign" and that "there are different God-ordained norms for each sphere such that a business must not be run like a church, or an educational institution must not be run like a governmental agency" (Quatro, 2012, 84). In this 'business as business' model, business has its own purpose and norms—and as we pursue those aims and goals of business "God uses us to extend common grace to all people, meeting legitimate product/service needs and providing livelihood and generating wealth for many…God equally sows His goodness to both His people and to the unredeemed through business activity" (Quatro, 2012, 84).

Quatro is quite specific in his critique and reservations about movements like "BAM, social entrepreneurship, and even for-profit higher education" and he says "I herein suggest that embracing such movements without deep and broad thinking as to the larger impact on God's world, and His intended design for that world, is reckless at best and outright folly at worst." (Quatro, 2012, 84). As he points out, "It is a tricky endeavor indeed to merge the mandates imposed on these different components of God's creation [business and Church]" (Quatro, 2012, 84).

Here we have a very strong defense of a business-as-business approach which sees business as a sphere separate from the religious sphere, and so application of faith or biblical morals or principles such as care for the poor or trying to help society in general to business are misguided because such attempts do not rightly understand and respect the concept and importance of sphere sovereignty. On such a view, it seems, applying one's faith values to business (as in the example of EoC) is 'folly'.

3C A Critique of the Business as Business Approach

However, in light of our previous discussion about the need for shalom to direct and infect all spheres of life, so that all of our life is lived before the face of God (coram Deo), and the resulting necessity for us to live out our faith in the marketplace, I do not think Quatro's radical separation of the spheres of church and business is warranted, nor is it a necessary conclusion from a sovereign-spheres approach, rightly understood. Amy Sherman provides a better view that we as Christians are called to participate in God's redemptive mission in every sphere of life (Sherman, 2022). The question, as one reviewer put it, it not to ask "whether" one should practice shalom in business, but "how". I will here share some further disagreements with such a radical separation perspective.

3C1 Christians should be wary of wanting to have completely different rules for their business behavior than they do for their personal behavior.

Albert Carr famously argued that business has different 'rules' than personal ethics. Business rules, he said, are more like poker rules than like one's personal ethics or religious ethics: "The essential point... is that the ethics of business are game ethics, different from the ethics of religion. . . . The justification rests on the fact that business, as practiced by individuals as well as by corporations, has the impersonal character of a game" (Carr, 1968, 144). On Carr's view, there are distinct spheres of practice, and the rules for one's personal life—that one should not lie to one's spouse, or to others in general—do not apply to business, where it is assumed that in negotiations and other situations one will not be as forthright, much more like the rules of poker. I have argued elsewhere against this sort of disenfranchised, bifurcated, or even schizophrenic view of separate ethics-fields as being problematic, advocating instead for an ethical holism which applies across one's life uniformly (Gustafson, 2000). It seems that the sphere sovereignty approach (certainly if it is best interpreted as a business-as-business approach) is similar in that respect at least— the problem of a divided self when it comes to personal and professional ethics.

The business-as-business approach, it seems, assumes a Friedman approach to business—that the purpose of business is to make a profit (and as much profit as possible)—within the boundaries of law and custom, etc. This view itself is rooted

in a traditional Smithian economic perspective, that if we all pursue our own interest (while adhering to the proper moral values which enable the market to operate freely—i.e., integrity, fairness, honesty, etc.) that the invisible hand of the market will help eventuate the common good of everyone, albeit unintentionally, through the market. This view assumes a pessimistic anthropology—what might be called an Augustinian/Lutheran/Calvinist anthropology which sees humans to be too corrupt to be expected to willingly cooperate (Bruni, 2024, 43-52). This somewhat pessimistic anthropology is a view adopted by the enlightenment thinker Hobbes, it is found in Smith, and might be argued to eventuate in the thinking of Bentham, whose utilitarianism had an outsized influence on contemporary neoliberal economics. As Bruni and Zamagni put it, "The Reformation and Counter-Reformation offer extraordinary evidence of the power of unintended consequences….the radical incapacity of the natural person for virtue—Adam's post-sin decline—produced a strong anthropological parsimony,…The Hobbesian wolf-man emerged from Luther…" (Bruno & Zamagni, 2016, 46; Bruni, 2024, 69-75). It is too much to expect people (Hobbesian wolf-men) to intentionally pursue the common good through cooperation and communion with others, so the best we can do is encourage them to pursue their own interests within the constraints of the law and ethics supporting a free market, and the common good will emerge. This is exactly what Smith thought when he said that as the butcher, brewer and baker pursued their own self interests, the market would end up providing for the well being of all (the meat, beer, and bread we need). Friedman likewise believed that people participate in market transactions for their own interests, and that such self interested participation in a free market is the best way to organize the economy (rather than centralized planning, etc.). Our entire system of taxes and regulations assumes a pessimistic view of humans—that we will donate to charity when it is tax-advantageous, that we can only eliminate the excessive marketization of certain industries through heavy regulations prohibiting monopolies, etc. The system expects, and so inadvertently supports, a low view of the human capacity to have concern for others. And it seems that the business-as-business model assumes just such a low bar for humanity. But we can do better.

3C2 The Good Business Can Do

There are many kinds of good things that business produces in the world—some inadvertent, some intentional. All of them can be described as positive externalities (as opposed to negative externalities)—results of two parties which result in a positive outcome for a third (somewhat unrelated) party. For example, in Omaha, there are a lot of people who invested in Berkshire Hathaway stock early on, and they made a lot of money. In part because of this, there are a lot of nice restaurants in Omaha—more than is customary for a city its size. This, it could be argued, is a fortunate positive externality for those who own no Berkshire

Hathaway stock—everyone enjoys the benefit of good restaurants due to the activities of other parties altogether (i.e., Berkshire Hathaway stockholders). So there are unintended positive externalities of business practices— companies produce employment, tax revenue, goods and services which are popular and useful in society, and many other benefits to stakeholders—in the process of attempting to make a profit. And a lot of unintended goods can come out of a purely profit-driven mindset (business-as-business) (Gustafson, 2014, 246). But it is possible for companies to also create *intended* positive externalities, where it is intentionally determined that the company wants to achieve good societal ends as it makes a profit, but not just inadvertently as it pursues profit. In fact, such decisions may cost the company some profit margin. This is not fantastical, or mythical. Companies, many of them unredeemed, decide to practice business in this way. We and our students are well aware of Patagonia, Clif Bars, Toms Shoes, and the very long list of social benefit companies who have determined to make money and in one way or another to simultaneously 'save the world.' Of course one can cynically fit these decisions into the theory of one's pessimistic anthropology by reducing all such behaviors as public relations or marketing moves which in fact are designed to increase the financial bottom line, but such a reductionist interpretation seems to miss the actual spirit of many of these actions.

When one thinks of integrity, it is useful to think of the fuselage of an airplane. One hopes any airplane you get has integrity—that all the pieces fit together and are well formed as a unity. Integrity is ultimately about all the pieces fitting together and making sense as a whole unity. As Christians we have the unique opportunity to live out our spirituality through our business practices, and in so doing it is not merely applying Christian rules of behavior to business. Rather, when we start to see our business practices as an outgrowth of our desire to spread communion (or shalom) in the world, our business practices themselves become a source of spiritual challenge, growth and enrichment. This is the true integrity we should seek as Christians—an *integration* of our spiritual pursuits to know and glorify God in all that we say and do, and our day to day business practices.

I am excited by the opportunities and insights I have gained by getting to know the Economy of Communion movement—both to understand their vision of what business can be, and to get to know business people who are living out this vision of work as vocation in a way which truly seeks to bring about communion with others, and to see God in all things and all persons we encounter. To believe in it, though, does require a more optimistic anthropology—a hope that people can choose to practice their for-profit business in a way which is sacrificial for the benefit of others. EoC provides an interesting and fruitful movement to consider when one is looking for models of business which can help achieve true Shalom.

4. Practical Application and Conclusion

The reader may find themselves at the end of this essay feeling inspired by the EoC mission, but wondering if it really has much application to the vast majority of people in business who are neither entrepreneurs nor business owners. This is a reasonable concern/objection. But fortunately, I think anyone can live out EoC values, regardless of whether they are a business owner or entrepreneur. Consider the 10 aspects of EoC which we highlighted in this essay:

1. Business as a Spiritual Practice
2. Beyond Charity Model: Business Itself as Means of Help
3. Business Supporting the Common Good (Intended and Unintended)
4. Addressing Many Types of Poverty through Business (Not Just Financial)
5. Practicing Business to Transform Society and Economy
6. Beyond Quid Pro Quo: An Economy of Gift and Love?
7. Beyond Merit: Business as Opportunity for Grace
8. Beyond "Just Business, Nothing Personal": Sharing in the Messiness and Wounds of others
9. Beyond "Human Resources": Business as Opportunity for Human Development/Flourishing
10. Overcoming a Divided Life

As employees and even as customers, we can see Business as a Spiritual Practice, and engage with others with that mindset. We can also see business as a means of help. You could hire homeless or others struggling to mow your lawn or help with a painting project. This will involve more effort on your part than simply hiring a professional company to do it, but it is a way to engage with the poor. If you work as an accountant, you could help organize a VITA (volunteer income tax assistance) program, recruiting other accountants to volunteer time to serve the underserved who need help with their taxes (VITA, n.d.). If you are a financial planner you could organize a similar sort of program to help those with a low net worth to learn how to invest. You can suggest options when purchasing or making other decisions at work which may be better at supporting the common good. I know of property maintenance workers who have suggested changing out all the light fixtures to low-energy use lighting, providing environmental benefit and also long term cost benefits to the company—and their suggestions were implemented. Anyone who works with anyone can certainly see poverty of community, relationship and social connection in people around you, and certainly you need not own a company to develop a heart to help others who are impoverished in those

ways. One need not be an owner of the company to suggest ways the company can provide grace to customers, or charitable opportunities for your organization. And all of us have the opportunity to provide more grace to coworkers, subordinates, and customers, and to pursue ways to help them flourish more through their work by supporting them in ways which go above and beyond what is expected. Living out our faith in this way—seeking to bring about communion through business activities—will bring blessings as well as wounds. It's not as convenient sometimes, and it takes more effort most times. But it also makes our business practices come alive with meaning. In this way, we overcome the divided life, and we bring about Shalom.

In this paper I hope I have demonstrated a number of things. First, I have provided an extensive explanation of the Economy of Communion, and the distinctive aspects of its approach. Second, I have argued that the economy of communion approach to business is a great exemplar of business practices aiming at shalom. The distinctive pursuit of communion through business activity is a way of seeking to bring about shalom. It makes sense to bring these traditions into dialogue, as I have here. Third, I have argued that the sovereign spheres doctrine can be respected while not falling into a business-as-business approach. Rather, shalom can and should be sought in all spheres, and as business brings about shalom and communion, business practice is brought more fully *coram deo*—before the face of God. Fourth, I have argued that Russell's view of BAM actually fits well with the EoC approach to business. I hope that highlighting the EoC approach is useful in the further development of considering the many ways that we can bring about Shalom in business and through business.

Bibliography

Ambrogetti, F. and Rubin, S. 2023. *Papa Francisco. El pastor: Desafíos, razones y reflexiones sobre su pontificado / Pope Francis: The shepherd. struggles, reasons, and thoughts on his papacy.* New York: Penguin Random House.

Andringa, L. 2010. "The Economy of Communion." Economy of Communion: EdC Online.
Available at https://edc-online.org/en/publications/conference-speeches/6000-economy-of-communion.html

_____. 2004. “Economy of Communion” Portuguese site: https://www.ekai.pl/drs-l-s-j-andringa-economy-of-communion/

Araujo, V. 2002. “Personal and societal prerequisites of the Economy of Communion.” In *The Economy of Communion: Toward a multi-dimensional economic culture.* Edited by L. Bruni. Translated by L. Gold. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press: 21-30.

Baus, G. 2006. "Dooyeweerd's societal Sphere Sovereignty: A theory of differentiated responsibility", *Griffin's View: Journal of International and Comparative Law*, **7** (2).

Brueggemann, W. 1976. *Living towards a vision: Biblical reflections on shalom*. Philadelphia, PA: United Church Press.

Bruni, L. 2014. “The Economy of Communion: A project for a sustainable and happy socioeconomic future” *Claritas: Journal of Dialogue and Culture* 3.2, 33-42.

Bruni, L., and Hejj, T. 2011. “The Economy of Communion.” In Bouckaert, L., Zsolnai, L. (Ed.s) *Handbook of Spirituality and Business*. London: Palgrave Macmillan: 378-386.

Bruni, L., and Uelmen, A. 2006. The Economy of Communion project. *Fordham Journal of Corporate and Financial Law* 11.3 645-680.

Bruni, L. and Zamagni, S. 2016. *Civil economy*. NY: Peter Lang.

Buckeye J. and Gallagher, J. 2014. *Structures of grace.* Hyde Park, NY: New City Press.

Cafferky, M. E. 2014. The ethical-religious framework for shalom. *Journal of Religion and Business Ethics* V3A7. https//via.library.depaul.edu/jrbe/vol3/iss1/7

Carr, A. Z. 1968. “Is business bluffing ethical?” *Harvard Business Review*, January-February, 143-153.

Catechism of the Catholic Church. 1906. https://www.vatican.va/content/catechism/en/part_three/section_one/chapter_two/article_2/ii_the_common_good.html

Crivelli, L. 2020. “Economy of Communion, poverty, and a humanized economy” *Journal of Religion and Society* (Sup22, 2020) 20-26.

Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, 2018. https://cas.stthomas.edu/_media-library/_documents/catholic-studies/vocation-of-the-business-leader.pdf

Esteso-Blasco, M.A., Gil-Marqués, M. and Sapena, J. 2021. Leadership in Economy of Communion companies. Contribution to the Common Good through Innovation. *Humanistic Management Journal,* 6, 77–101.

Francis 2017. "Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to participants in the meeting 'Economy of Communion' sponsored by the Focolare Movement" Vatican. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/february/documents/papa-francesco_20170204_focolari.html

Gallagher, J., and Buckeye, J. 2014. *Structures of grace: The business practices of the Economy of Communion*. Hyde Park: New City Press.

O'Connell, G. 2023. "Pope Francis says he does not 'condemn capitalism' in new book" *America*. *https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2023/02/27/pope-francis-el-pastor-244808?gad=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwu4WoBhBkEiwAojNdXsahDFMr-X_QjMx2QrYoc7AR4gROv3tUIy4G4bFGKx4vqDFm9alXYBoCtVwQAvD_BwE*

Gold, L. 2010 *New financial horizons: The emergence of an Economy of Communion*. Hyde Park: New City Press.

Goudzwaard, B. 2011. "The Principle of Sphere-Sovereignty in a time of globalization". *Koers* 76(2) 357-371.

Gustafson, A. 2024. "EOC: Putting Catholic Social Thought to work" *Finding faith in business: An Economy of Communion vision*. Los Angeles: New City Press.

_____. 2014. Business in the service of the Common Good: A Christian Perspective in *Journal of Religion and Society*. Sup. 10. 242-256. https://cdr.creighton.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/e9bdf22e-a454-4cc5-849a-a21e70c1cc0d/content

_____. 2000. In support of ethical holism: A response to "Religious perspectives in business ethics" *Business Ethics Quarterly* 10:2, 441-450.

Gustafson, A., and Harvey, C. 2020 "Business, faith and the Economy of Communion: An introduction" *Journal of Religion and Society* (Sup22, 2020) 1-

11. Also published in *Finding faith in business* (2024) Los Angeles: New City Press, pp.13-32.

Guitian, G. 2010. "Integral subsidiarity and Economy of Communion: Two challenges from Caritas in Veritate" *Journal of Markets & Morality*, 13:2, 279–295.

Henderson, R. 2017. "The development of the principle of distributed authority, or Sphere Sovereignty" *Philosophia Reformata* 82.1 74-99.

Johnson, C. 2009. *Business as mission: A comprehensive guide to theory and practice*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.

Kuyper, A. 1998 [1880] "Sphere Sovereignty" in *Abraham Kuyper: A centennial reader* (J. D. Bratt Ed.) Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 461-490.

Kuyper, A. 1998 [1878]. "Calvinism: Source and stronghold of our constitutional liberties" in *Abraham Kuyper: A centennial reader*, ed. J. D. Bratt. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 279-322.

_____. 2021. *On business and economics* Edited by J. J. Ballor, M. Flikkema, and P. Heslam. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

_____. 2013. Rooted and Grounded, trans. N. D. Kloosterman. Grand Rapids, MI: Christian's Library Press.

_____. 1931. *Lectures on Calvinism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans.

Lai, P. 2005. *Tentmaking: The life and work of business as missions*. Colorado Springs, CO: Authentic Publishing.

Lubich, C. 2020. "For an Economy based on Communion" *Journal of Religion and Society* supplement 20, 12-15. https://cdr.creighton.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/fce2b88e-8c5d-4072-9504-f48245df9cf3/content

McIlroy, D. H. 2003. "Subsidiarity and Sphere Sovereignty: Chistian reflections on the size, shape and scope of government" *Journal of Church and State* 45.4 739-763.

Mundell, J. 2014. Forewords. In Buckeye J. and Gallagher, J. *Structures of grace*. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press.

Naughton, M., J. Buckeye, K. Goodpaster, T.D. Maines. 2015. *Respect in Action: Applying Subsidiarity in Business*. St. Paul MN: University of St. Thomas.

Phillips, M. H., & Phillips, L. C. 2021. "Shalom at work: Bridging the Sunday-Monday gap". *Journal of Biblical Integration in Business*, 24(1): 19-28.

Plantinga, C. 2002. *Engaging God's World.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Prahlad C.K. 2006. *The Fortune at the bottom of the pyramid.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Wharton School Publishing.

Poverty Inc. 2015. C. Mauren (Producer) *PovertyCure*. Grand Rapids, MI: Acton Institute.

Quatro, S. A. 2012. Is business as mission (BAM) a flawed concept? A Reformed Christian response to the BAM movement. *Journal of Biblical Integration in Business*, 15(1): 80-87.

Rundle, S., and Steffen, T. 2003. *Great commission companies: The emerging role of business in missions*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Russell, M. L. 2010. *The missional entrepreneur: Principles and practices for business as mission*. Birmingham, AL: New Hope Publishers.

Sherman, A. 2022. *Agents of flourishing: Pursuing Shalom in every corner of society*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press.

Smith, T. M., Steen, T. P., & VanderVeen, S. 2016. Doing "good" and doing "well": Shalom in Christian business education. *Christian Business Academy Review*, 1:113-121

Stansbury, J. 2018. Shalom and moral imagination for business technologists. *Christian Business Review*, 7: 30-39.

VITA, n.d. (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program) https://www.irs.gov/individuals/free-tax-return-preparation-for-qualifying-taxpayers

Weinberger, L. D. 2002. The Business Judgment Rule and Sphere Sovereignty *Thomas M. Cooley Law Review* 27.2 279-319.

Wolterstorff, N. 2004. *Educating for shalom: Essays on Christian higher education* (C. W. Joldersma & G. G. Stronks, Ed.s). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans.

Yoder, P. B. 1997. *Shalom: The Bible's word for salvation, justice, and peace*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.