

Religion and Business

Mention the words religion and business in one breath, and chances are good that someone will be offended. It's a common conviction within most Western societies that the two do not and should not be mixed—ever. Yet when Laura Nash and Scotty McLennan began to investigate this controversial arena, they found a lot of dissatisfaction with the status quo, as well as tension and confusion, among both executives and clergy. On the executive side, says Nash, "Just across the board, interviewees would be saying, 'Life as a business leader that is very lonely. It requires many masks and many responsibilities that aren't from the same person I am at home and in my church on Sunday, and I don't know how to navigate that transition.'"

Mainstream churches, meanwhile, were not benefiting from the distanced relationship, and indeed were giving way to secular spirituality and its offshoots from New Age crystals to personal empowerment. How to bridge the Sunday-Monday gap? Nash, a senior researcher, and McLennan, the dean for religious life at Stanford University and a former senior lecturer at HBS, describe the hurdles as well as a practical framework to overcome them in their new book, *Church on Sunday, Work on Monday: The Challenge of Fusing Christian Values with Business Life*. "This is one of the great uncharted areas that is part of most people's lives, and yet we haven't prepared managers and the business community to think about this very strongly," Nash says. "What we were very concerned about with the book is not to set out a blueprint for solving this, because we don't think there is a blueprint. What there is a very deep need for self-reflection and community reflection." Say you are in a negotiation for a large contract. If you get the contract, the company's going to grow quite a bit. But you've had to put a lot of resources into the construction of this deal. And it's risky, very risky. The terms of that deal begin to look unethical to you from any number of standpoints—layoffs; cost-cutting to the point where you know you're going to stretch your work force very, very thin; quality tradeoffs that may mean that you're not going to be delivering on what you say, and there may even be a safety factor. Honesty inside the marketplace in terms of how you're representing yourself and what you can deliver. All these things are typical stresses in the business environment. Where would religion fit in there? Well, religion could fit in a number of ways. One is, first of all, the personal perspective, that sacred self: "I am more than the deal." It's really easy to forget that you are something more than the deal when you get in these high-stress situations.

Meditation, prayer or reading a sacred text could pull them out enough to keep that perspective. When they keep that perspective, they also start to keep their heads and get creative in the way they structure the deal. It may give them courage to kick back. You know, if people are fearful, for example, they can get very abusive; they can get very destructive. That's not always the best way to approach deal making. This whole thing of win-win situations: if you're really hating the other person, it tends to escalate and deals break down that way. Greed kicks in; whereas if your religion is from an ethic of love—which sounds so squishy—in fact it can be the anchor for good business practices. So religion in that case, in the catalytic and foundational area, can really begin to have a deep effect both on the emotions in a business deal and on the ethics.

Adapted from www.unesco.org

Ex. 1 Find the words or expressions in the text which mean the following:

- 1) an opinion: _____
- 2) an unchanged state of things: _____
- 3) disorientation: _____
- 4) e.g. priests or pastors: _____
- 5) to find your way around sth: _____
- 6) most commonly visited churches: _____
- 7) thinking about yourself: _____
- 8) an agreement: _____
- 9) firing employees: _____
- 10) making compromises: _____
- 11) a security aspect: _____
- 12) a „conversation“ with a deity: _____

Ex. 2 Match the expressions from the two columns into logical collocations:

1.	to benefit	a blueprint for sth
2.	to give	area
3.	to beidge	way to sth
4.	an uncharted	thin
5.	to be concerned	standpoint
6.	to set out	resources into sth
7.	to put a lot of	about sth
8.	from a	the gap
9.	to stretch your workforce	situations
10.	high-stress	from sth

Ex. 3 Provide English equivalents of these expressions:

1) świecki	7) na wiele sposobów
2) dziekan	8) zachować zdrowy rozsądek
3) przeszkoda	9) „postawić się”
4) nieetyczne	10)skłonny do nadużyć
5) cięcie kosztów	11)eskalować
6) wypełnić zobowiązanie	12)punkt zaczepienia

Grammar corner...

One of the indicators that you've mastered grammar is your fluent use of phrasal verbs. You've found some in the text, e.g. kick in (start), fit in (be suitable somewhere), pull sth out (finish, stretch in time), lay sb off (fire sb), set sth out (outline, present sth).

Ex. 4 Use appropriate phrasal verbs.

1. When there was a power outage, the backup generators _____.
2. The main investor decided to _____, so the project collapsed.
3. We'd like to _____ the development plans for the next year.
4. Many teens desperately want to _____ with a group, which is why they often try stupid or dangerous things.
5. Many people will be _____ because of work automation.

GLOSSARY	
a conviction	przekonanie
status quo	stan rzeczy
confusion	zamieszanie
clergy	kler
to navigate sth	odnaleźć drogę
mainstream churches	główne związki wyznaniowe
self-reflection	wgląd w siebie
a deal	umowa
layoffs	zwolnienia
a trade off	pójście na kompromis/ustępstwa
a safety factor	czynnik bezpieczeństwa
prayer	modlitwa
to benefit from sth	czepać z czegoś korzyści
to give way to sth	ustąpić miejsca czemuś
to bridge the gap	zniwelować różnice
an uncharted area	niezbadany obszar
to be concerned with sth	obawiać się czegoś
to set out a blueprint for sth	określić plan działania
to put a lot of resources into sth	zaangażować w coś dużo zasobów
from a standpoint	z punktu widzenia
to stretch your workforce thin	„cisnąć” pracowników
high-stress situations	sytuacje stresowe
secular	świecki
dean	dziekan
a hurdle	przeszkoda
unethical	nieetyczne
cost-cutting	cięcie kosztów
to deliver on sth	wypełnić zobowiązanie

in a number of ways	na wiele sposobów
to keep one's head	zachować zdrowy rozsądek
to kick back	„postawić się”
abusive	skłonny do nadużyć
to escalate	eskalować
to be the anchor for sth	być dla czegoś punktem zaczepienia
greed	chciwość
a deity	bóstwo

ANSWER KEY:

Ex. 1

- 1) a conviction
- 2) status quo
- 3) confusion
- 4) clergy
- 5) to navigate sth
- 6) mainstream churches
- 7) self-reflection
- 8) a deal
- 9) layoffs
- 10) a tradeoff
- 11) a safety factor
- 12) prayer

Ex. 2

- 1) to benefit from sth
- 2) to give way to sth
- 3) to bridge the gap
- 4) an uncharted area
- 5) to be concerned about sth
- 6) to set out a blueprint for sth
- 7) to put a lot of resources into sth
- 8) from a standpoint
- 9) to stretch your workforce thin
- 10) high-stress situations

Ex. 3

- 1) secular
- 2) dean
- 3) a hurdle
- 4) unethical
- 5) cost-cutting
- 6) to deliver on sth
- 7) in a number of ways
- 8) to keep one's head
- 9) to kick back
- 10) abusive
- 11) to escalate
- 12) to be the anchor for sth

Ex. 4

- 1) kicked in
- 2) pull out
- 3) set out
- 4) fit in
- 5) laid off