

New Initiative: Faith in Business Monthly (FiBM)

Peter S. Heslam

Faith in Business (FiB) is inspired by a vision of business as a force for good, transforming society in a way that expresses the kingdom of God. It encourages and equips Christian businesspeople to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ in a demanding workplace context.

One way we do this is through an annual retreat in Cambridge. But when this had to be cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic, I was eager to find a way we could fulfil our purpose through meetings held in virtual space. I consulted with three groups of people: speakers who had been due to give a talk at the retreat; disappointed registrants who had been looking forward to participating in the retreat; and FiB's Executive Team.

What has emerged is a monthly online event called Faith in Business Monthly (FiBM). This is a mixture of talks and interviews with Christian business leaders, expert coaches and practical theologians, some of whom are due to speak at our retreat next Spring. They all have expertise that helps equip business leaders as they steer their companies through the choppy waters of the pandemic and post-pandemic world. They offer a Christian perspective, currently with a focus on wellbeing at work.

FiBM takes place on the first Thursday of every month at 12:30. Up to 100 Participants join a live Zoom meeting. After listening to a talk or interview, they have the opportunity to ask questions and engage in discussion, either verbally or through the chat channel.

At the time of writing, two FiBM meetings have taken place, each attracting over 70 participants from all over the world. On 7th May 2020, Marjory Mair of Marjory Mair Associates addressed the subject 'Joy at Work in Times of Crisis'. Appealing to both theology and practice, she drew a distinction between joy and happiness. Whereas happiness varies according to circumstances, she argued, joy is a deeper emotion rooted in God. Drawing on the work of Daniel Pink, she led a guided reflection on how to increase joy in our work by focusing on three areas of motivation: autonomy, mastery and purpose.

The second FiBM webinar took place on 4th June 2020. In it, Dr Penny Pullan of Making Projects Work addressed 'How to Flourish as Remote Teams and Businesses'. Her interest in virtual leadership began in 2001 when she was due to fly to New York on 13th September for the launch of a global programme. But with flights suddenly grounded following 9/11, she led her team in devising ways to deliver the programme online. She offered FiBM participants a wealth of practical strategies to help them serve Christ through their businesses when face-to-face contact is problematic.

The third FiBM, on 2nd July, included a talk by Karen Kircher. An expert in leadership training and emotional intelligence, her talk was entitled 'Keeping Emotionally Balanced in Challenging Times'. Be sure to join us and to put the remaining dates in your diaries: 6th August, 3rd September, 1st October, 5th November, and 3rd December in 2020; and 7th January, 4th February, 4th March and 1st April in 2021. To avoid disappointment, reserve your place early via the link on the Faith in Business website. Having received lots of positive feedback on the first two FiBMs, you are assured of a monthly lunchbreak filled with stimulation, practical advice, and positive engagement.