

Richard Higginson interviews Andrew Glover



Andrew, congratulations on becoming chair of Faith in Business. As former chair, I am particularly grateful to you for taking on this role.

What attracted you about the role of being chair?

I've been coming to the Faith in Business retreats on and off since 2004 and started my subscription to FiBQ straight afterwards and have continued ever since. As such I have appreciated all of the content and interactions those have brought and deeply valued the challenge and reflection that they have stimulated in my business and life generally. So now that I have a little more free time, it felt like the right time to try and give back and join the Trustees. I wouldn't say I was attracted to the role of chair (!) but recognised that while all of the Trustees are highly competent and capable of doing the role, I potentially had more time available and also being in Cambridge helps on the administration side.

Do you have a vision for Faith in Business? Any particular direction you would like to see it go or new developments that you are proposing?

This is something that the Trustees are working on at present. The inheritance that we have from yourself over the last 30 years and the excellent work of the Trustees over the last few years since the separation from Ridley Hall provides a solid framework. In many ways this doesn't need to change and will continue to provide value and benefit. However, we do believe that we should seek to clarify what our particular strengths are and the community that we are best able to serve. We acknowledge that we have a rich and strong heritage in academic study and debate and this now continues with our partnerships with other institutions, such as The Mockler Center. We know we have increasingly attracted a diverse range of individuals to the retreats, both in terms of their roles within business as well as age and ethnicity – and one of the key questions is whether any of these categories requires greater focus (e.g. leaders in business or

anyone in business? senior or junior? etc).

In summary I have a vision for FiB to remain relevant to everyone in business, to continue to challenge both Christians and the wider business community to ethical and biblical integrity, and to provide support to those seeking to make sense of their working lives.

Tell us something about your life in business. What sector did you work in?

I started in software development before moving into technical consulting and IT and Telecoms more generally. I co-founded Bridge Partners (an IT support company for businesses) in 2001. Hence the realisation that I needed to work out what it meant to integrate faith and work – and so the start of my journey in this area. This led not only to discovering FiB, but also the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC). In addition I was involved in running Chaplaincy to People at Work in the Cambridge region.



Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, the home of the Mockler Center

Photo: Gordon-Conwell

Outage

Photo: Data Center Dynamics, NZ



To borrow from LICC 6M's of Fruitfulness (<https://licc.org.uk/ourresources/6m-people>) I've always seen my gifts as being "Moulding culture" and "Modelling godly character" (and hopefully some of the others thrown in!). So that has been how I've approached running our businesses. (I also founded three other businesses along the way). I like to believe that this deeply impacted the ethos of the company, and it was certainly noted by clients and others and also recognised when we came to sell. More recently I've been involved at a national level in trade associations and industry groups where I have tried to influence behaviours and challenge unjust approaches.

Any particular satisfactions or challenges that you would like to tell us about?

The answer to both I think is staff! I've always said that running a business is fairly easy (!), but managing staff takes most of the time and energy. It can be rewarding, seeing people grow both in their roles and as individuals, but dealing with the issues that people bring can be both a burden and difficult. We didn't consider that people should leave their personal issues at home, rather that we employed the whole person. This means acknowledging their pressures, helping them to manage, providing flexibility as well as challenging, and being firm when necessary.

We found that it would take months, if not years, for new staff to trust and

recognise that this approach wasn't just words but that we meant it, and they wouldn't be judged or disadvantaged for being open. The best advocates for this were of course their colleagues rather than management.

The biggest challenge, that I'm not sure we fully sorted, was how to still achieve this when we grew from a few employees to 50+, as well as the recent challenges of hybrid working.

Can you describe any incidents in which your Christian faith came to the fore and made a difference to what you decided?

There was a particular incident that remains in my mind. One of our companies provided internet connectivity to many businesses and as we all know keeping the lights on is critical and outages are not tolerated. We had recently had a minor outage that had impacted service when, one Friday morning, we lost service to the whole network. This happened to coincide with my partner being on holiday and I was actually at a 48 hour LICC conference. Being in a prayerful, supportive environment and being able to draw on the wisdom of others who were more experienced made what was a stressful and pressured few hours more bearable. The real issue was the realisation that we had caused the problem and it wasn't "out of our control". It would have been very easy,

and tempting, to tell customers that there had "been a problem elsewhere" or obfuscated, but living our values (clarity and partnership) I felt that we had to be honest. I therefore sent an email to all customers explaining the issue, acknowledging the fault, promising improvement and seeking forgiveness (and provided credits to service). While the majority of customers simply got on with their lives, the majority of those who did respond, while annoyed with the outage, were grateful for the response and surprised by the openness. The result was we didn't lose any business; the company improved its processes; staff felt supported and I learnt that "doing the right thing" could be honoured. Oh, and having a prayerful, wise support network was priceless.

Have you any advice for FiBQ?

Any topics on which you'd like to see articles?

As a long-term subscriber I have valued receiving the journal and seeing what the various features are when it lands on the doormat. The range of styles and content means there is always something of interest and the book reviews have been helpful as guides to further reading and study. So, in essence, please keep up the good work. I think the main challenge is to see how we can use the resources of the archive to reach a wider audience as well as increasing the subscriber base generally.

Thank you very much, Andrew. 