

Revd Geoff Colmer

Presidential Profile

Who am I?

I have the privilege of serving as Regional Minister and Team Leader of the Central Baptist Association. In what sometimes seems like a previous life I was a professional musician, playing the bassoon in the English Northern Philharmonia, and music continues to play a large part in my life and ministry. Following my training at Spurgeon's College I was Minister of Rye Baptist Church and then Melton Mowbray Baptist Church, before moving to my present role in 2004.

I have a depth of understanding and experience of Baptists Together in all its expressions: colleges, churches, associations, and the national resource, and have served on a large number of its groups. As an energetic advocate for women's ministry, it is a pleasure to serve on the Gender Justice Group. I have extensive ecumenical experience that includes representing the Baptist World Alliance at the 2008 Lambeth Conference, and I've served on the European Baptist Federation Council.



What matters to me?

My ministry is defined by being a pastor, not as something I do but as something I am. This became instilled in me at theological college and has grown through further training as a counsellor, in mediation, and also in understanding congregational systems. As a pastor with an evangelistic heart I am wholly and actively committed to 'growing healthy churches in relationship for God's mission.'



Deepening my own spiritual growth through the good times as well as the tough ones has been important throughout my ministry and I've drawn inspiration from other Christian traditions while being rooted in our own Baptist story. It was a great privilege to participate in founding The Order for Baptist Ministry (2009) with a vision to enable ministers to develop and flourish through patterns of prayer and accountability in groups. In 2013 I had a fresh experience of Jesus by the Spirit while engaging with the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises. This is best described as a school of contemplative prayer where God is encountered through in-depth engagement with Scripture passages. This special encounter and renewed energy for ministry led me to train as an Ignatian Spiritual Director in order to accompany others who are seeking to deepen their relationship and attentiveness to God.

What will I bring?

My primary calling is to *seek to be attentive to God*, and help others to be attentive to God. This is a conscious orientation. It may be particularly challenging for us as Baptists because we are by nature a movement of activists. In an age of anxiety, distraction, busyness and noise, being attentive to God has never been more important. To ensure that activism does not become a driven-ness that does neither us nor the world any good, there is a pressing need for an attentiveness which inspires our activity. This is in no way an alternative to the mission imperative but an essential part of it: we must be attentive to what the Spirit is saying. Another tradition would speak of being 'contemplatives in action'. If called to be President, I would focus upon ***being attentive to rhythms of grace***: an attentiveness to God, in our own lives, and in the lives of all those we encounter, both within the church and beyond it, 'seeking to be a movement of Spirit-led communities.'

What else matters to me?

One of my favourite verses of Scripture is, *Jesus said, 'I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly'. John 10.10*. I experience this abundant life in many ways, some mentioned above, but also in the gifts of my wife Cazz, our two sons, their wives, and our grandchildren; music and the arts; Italy and Italian food; and baking and cooking, all of which bring great joy!