

We are delighted to welcome Revd Roy Searle as the Baptist Union Northern Pioneer Co-ordinator. This exciting part-time post has been jointly funded by the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the Northern Baptist Associations (Yorkshire, Northern and the North Western) and officially begins on 1st January 2017.

In these challenging and opportune days, Roy's role is to encourage, inspire and help churches, Associations and our Union to engage missionally, in particular through pioneering, planting and Fresh Expressions.

At a national level, Roy's responsibilities will be to advocate and creatively communicate stories and help individuals and churches to pioneer; but he will have a primary focus on the North of England, across our three Northern associations.

He will seek to inspire, encourage and equip both established and emerging pioneers, church planters and people engaged in missional communities as well as helping churches to relate and communicate the gospel to their own and other unreached places in the North of England. Building hubs and networks, training, mentoring and coaching pioneers is a critical task if, as Baptists, we are going to face the missional challenges and embrace the opportunities of ministry in a changing world.

Roy will be working in this role while continuing as one of the leaders of the Northumbria Community. A former President of the Baptist Union, he has been involved in training and mentoring leaders for many years and has considerable experience of helping churches to think strategically, imaginatively and creatively about how to relate to those beyond the 'walls of the church'.

A committed northerner, Roy was born on Tyneside, educated in Harrogate and from an unchurched background came to faith while training to be an Outward Bound instructor in Scotland. He was the first full-time pastor of Portrack Baptist Church on Teesside, pioneering a growing church on an urban local authority housing estate before moving on to become the team leader at Enon Baptist Church in Sunderland.



Roy and his wife Shirley

Since 1992, he has been full-time with the Northumbria Community, which he founded with others in the late 1980s. A monastic missional community, with companions and friends across the world, the community has had a significant influence upon many Baptist ministers and churches over the last 20 years.

Roy is the Northern Baptist College Hub Tutor at Cranmer Hall, Durham, where as a Fellow of St John's College, he has helped to pioneer a Free Church Missional Leadership Course as well as establishing the opportunity for people to train for Baptist ministry in the north-east, with a particular emphasis on pioneering.

He is an Associate Tutor at Spurgeon's College, London, and a visiting lecturer at other colleges and leadership training institutions. He has travelled throughout Britain and Europe, encouraging people to love God and live generously. He is passionate about spirituality and missiology, the renewal and reimagining of the church in the changing world and how the gospel engages with contemporary life.

Roy will bring to the role his visionary 'apostolic' leadership and his 'prophetic' voice will speak into the challenges and opportunities that we face here in Britain and particularly the North of England.

Commenting on his appointment, Roy said: *"I am delighted by the opportunity and the prospects of working with others across our Associations and Union to encourage pioneering, planting and to refreshing ministries in order to make a difference missionally with the love and compassion of God to individuals and communities. I hope that, alone and together, we will listen and learn, discern, locate train, resource and see the pioneering, planting and fresh expressions of ministry and mission bring transformation, hope, healing and life to many."*

