

## **Following the Spirit, Finding Life, Sharing Bread**

Williamsburg Christian Church asked a challenging question: 'If the church were to shut its doors would the community notice?' In their initial response to the challenge, they wore themselves out with endeavours and new programmes. In this interview with Alan Roxburgh, Fred Ligin recalls that seven years ago, when he took up the role as pastor, the church took up a new approach, beginning with listening practices among the elders and then the congregation. At the same time, they began walking with a homeless family who went on to flourish within their community. Eighteen other faith groups in the city became interested in this way of working and across the city the church led a movement for justice and for care in the lives of individual families. (Video 0-3 mins)

Gaining a particular reputation, Williamsburg Christian Church began to attract people who through illness, poverty and disability were on the margins of society. The church grew and changed through this new life in its locally rooted missional communities and at its large gatherings, sometimes welcoming people who had been excluded from other congregations. Fred explains that in the challenge of this diversity, Eucharist has been important, and a sense of an ongoing journey towards reconciliation. (3- 5.30 mins)

Reflecting on place, Fred describes the church's growing sense of ownership for its city and its neighbourhoods and their new understanding of home in a 'culture of displacement'. They found that a posture of listening was the way into transformation. They asked the question 'What is God up to in this city?' and then, following from this, 'What kind of church does God need us to be?' Their liturgies became focused on the bread and wine. Silence and shared readings of scripture were important to reassure and confirm that God was in control and not their own plans, ideas and strategies. (5.30- 9.59 mins)