



experiencing

# TRANSITION

## The Cairn

Phil and Alice Lawrence and their family moved to the Knowle West estate in South Bristol in 2011. The remaining congregation of Knowle West Baptist Church had begun meeting with a local Anglican church; Phil and Alice were to be part of a re-imagining of the church that would reach out to the local community. In a video recorded back then, Phil quoted Dave Bilborough's song *An Army of Ordinary People* as a prophecy yet to be fulfilled, perhaps in the streets around him.

Six years later, Knowle West Baptist Church has become The Cairn, named for the former vicarage Phil and Alice bought, where up to 40 people gather for Sunday lunch followed by informal worship each month, and others meet for a monthly men's breakfast and seekers' group. Through the influence of a network of flexible, interconnected groups including two different men's breakfasts, a guitar club and a baking club, some members of the new community gathered around The Cairn are ready to move on to more intentional discipleship.

Phil uses a fishing metaphor to describe this. "It feels like a season when a lot of the 'ground bait' work has been done. It feels like a key time to ask who is God wanting us to 'fish' for and disciple."

Phil and Alice Lawrence



In this edition of WEBA news, we're looking at three situations where your church's Home Mission giving is supporting a church through a time of transition.



Recently, a weekly gathering to share bread and wine at The Cairn on a Sunday morning has become established, and a Life Recovery Group is about to begin meeting at premises contributed by a local Youth project. "It's designed for people who would be comfortable with a group like Alcoholics Anonymous" Phil explains, "but who have come to believe that their 'higher power' is Jesus. It's also for people who are open to exploring Christianity but wouldn't find it easy to fit into a conventional home group."

Talking to members of the community over Sunday lunch, there is no doubt of the impact this group is having - especially on men - in this community with its high levels of unemployment, addiction, and loneliness.

"I've started to believe in God again" one man told me. "The nice thing is that Phil won't pump it into you if you don't believe - he will talk from his own personal experience, rather than 'text book' religion."

A Home Mission grant is enabling Phil Lawrence to serve as Minister until land bought as a result of the sale of the old manse can be developed to provide a sustainable income for the church.