

Westminster College

IMAGINE

It is in the transforming that we see the skill and vision. In the shift from solid block to sculpted form the art becomes. In the reaching folds and the three this tree takes root. Its millions of years of hiddenness become visible; its possibilities new.

IMAGINE

... a regular reflection from me as I journey with you in this adventure that is our life together at Westminster.

NEIL

Tree of Life: Encounter

A year in the making, and longer in the planning, Westminster is now home to the marble leaf/tree form sculpted as a gift for the Woolf Institute by Helaine Blumenfeld. Helaine was inspired by the Institute's educational work amongst Jews, Christians and Muslims and by their arrival at Westminster. The sculpture makes tangible the inscription on the foundation stone of the Institute that we unveiled a while ago: "a threefold cord is not quickly broken" from Ecclesiastes (4:12).

Public art is delightfully evocative and powerfully divisive. I've already heard a good and honest spectrum of opinions about this piece just

as I imagined I would. Some have been inspired by it, others can see the skill in its making but dislike it. Some find it a perfect foil to the red brick surrounding it whilst others can't see it ever fitting here. Some want to reserve judgement until we've lived together for a while and seen the seasons frame it in the context of a year.

For my part you'll be unsurprised to hear that it moves me greatly. I'm struck by the notion of gift - that a major living artist heard our story and has responded to it like this. I love the fact that it is the same snowy Carrera marble from the quarries out of which Michelangelo carved David. I love its feel and the lightness of some of its faces; stone cut and



cut and cut until it folds like fabric floating. I like its permanence and its solidity as a statement of intent that the things we have worked so hard for at Westminster for so long, going back to the sisters themselves and their honouring of Jewish tradition alongside their vibrant Presbyterianism, matter. I delight that it echoes our art studio in letting theology and creativity come alive as much as our books can and do.

A new collaboration beginning

Very soon we'll welcome Revd Lordwell Siame to Westminster. He comes from the United Church of Zambia's Lusaka Presbytery and will spend a term with us. His arrival is the first in a brand new exchange programme Westminster, the UCZ and the URC's Wessex

Synod have developed. We intend this to become a regular exchange as folk from both the URC and the UCZ experience each others contexts and do specific research projects arising from their visits. It is an exciting new venture that will be a wonderful companion to our

existing Columbia exchange and Cheshunt sabbaticals. Do give Lordwell a warm welcome as we look forward to all he will bring to share with us. Do hold him, his family and everyone involved in your prayers.

