

Westminster College

IMAGINE

“Above all
else,
guard your
heart, for
everything
you do
flows from
it.”

Proverbs
4:23

IMAGINE

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

NEIL

Real Imagination

Greenbelt, August bank holiday Monday, 2018. Jenny and I were there in support of the URC and to promote Westminster. The URC is an official partner in this unique and stunning annual weekend festival of faith, art, politics, ethics, food, imagination, performance, music and friendship (Greenbelt's offices now take a floor of our Church House offices in London). Westminster was prominent in the URC tent!

Slipping away for a bit, we sat in a big top to listen to the most remarkable thing. It was a conversation and question time shared by a woman and a man. That may not seem particularly remarkable. Except this was Pat Magee,

the IRA man who planted the bomb in the Grand Hotel in Brighton in 1984 where many of the Conservative Party, including Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, were staying. Amongst others the bomb killed Sir Anthony Berry, Conservative MP. Magee spent 14 years in prison, being released as part of the Good Friday Agreement.

The woman was Jo Berry, daughter of Anthony. She had tracked Magee down and, over many, many pain filled conversations, the two had built a friendship. Their talk was entitled: “*Beyond Forgiveness: the supreme act of imagination.*”

Their mutual respect, depth of humanity, devastating honesty and evocative compassion



moved most of us to tears. To build a bridge to the one who has done you such harm! To build a bridge to the one you have most hurt! Their conclusions? That we are capable of tremendous evil; of turning human beings into pawns. But real encounter, truly sitting at length across a table from those we start off despising, hating, resenting or misunderstanding, sets free them, ourselves, and the world. “Amen,” I say.

Westminster's Prayers

It used to be that morning prayers in our chapel at 8:30 tended to only happen in term time. They tended to be the preserve of the teaching staff and students. That was great.

But that was then. Now we're transforming the college's

prayers as we embrace the new truth; that term and vacation really mean very little at least as far as the teachers and students and wider URC work of Westminster are concerned. People will come and go throughout the year. So prayers has changed. Anyone who wants

to is welcome to join us; 8:30-8:45am every weekday morning 51 weeks/year. We'll include prayers for the whole college and campus, and for the whole URC. Everybody is invited.

