

Saturday 1st June 2019

What a glorious day! From the moment the marquees and exhibitions started going up to the last goodbye at the college gates, the launch of the new **Association of Alumni and Friends of Westminster and Cheshunt Colleges** must go down as one of our happiest and most enjoyed recent moments. Around 150 people came, some returning to Westminster for the first time in decades. All were thrilled to see how far we have travelled together. All delighted in the warmth of the welcome and the happiness of our hospitality.

So this reflection must begin with thanks and appreciation. All of you who made this happen did an outstanding job that day and in all that prepared for it. The worship was thoughtful, funny and moving. The food was incredible. The place looked at its very best. The

efficiency of the planning showed in how well we let people enjoy the space and time without feeling rushed or stuck in line. And the follow up with individuals and via social media is continuing to delight. People are starting to donate and sign up to give regularly to help Westminster's future work and mission. Even the weather played its part and blessed us with sunshine.

Some memories linger. Watching Prof Janet Soskice unveil the blue plaque in honour of Agnes and Margaret and looking up to see their portraits looking down upon the scene. Here was an honouring of the past and of two sisters who are my sisters in Christ. All I could do was beam and feel a tear. Seeing generations of our students chatting on the lawn and knowing that we are links in a chain of faithfulness that stretches



deep into the past and is forged of fresh links today and tomorrow. Being reminded of the thoughts of those who saw Westminster arrive in Cambridge and noticing that some things have changed little, whilst others have been transformed. Trying to grab a drink only to start another conversation and forget where I had put it. The deep sense of peace and pride that enfolded me as the day closed and the college emptied. It was as if the place itself was smiling. Watching a new flag fly. Laughter ringing everywhere.

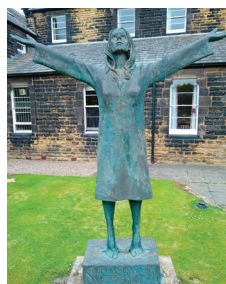
And in and through it all, God glorified. For this is God's place before it is ours.

“On 25 May 1897 the twins laid the foundation stone for the new college they had worked so hard to have built. It was to be called Westminster College, after the Presbyterian Church’s historic confession of faith. The timing of this event held an accidental irony: only four days earlier the Senate of the university had, in the culmination of a heated campaign, decisively rejected the proposal that Cambridge degrees be awarded to women.”

Sisters of Sinai: How Two Lady Adventurers Found The Hidden Gospels

Janet Soskice, 2009

A Possibility Comes Closer...



The URC's Education and Learning Committee oversees our work. It met in Leeds earlier this month and received a major paper we have worked on at Westminster for some time. Our hope, to be explored further by the Governors in the coming months, is to see if we can create a changing community of URC young adults living here for 10 months each year; a sort

of gap year for those aged 18-25. They would share fully in the life and worship of the college and work on all sorts of placements. The aim is to let them discover more of what God might be calling them to in the future. We're some way off sorting all the details and launching the scheme. But the committee unanimously, and with great enthusiasm, endorsed our plans and encouraged us to seek URC help in making it happen. A number of people told me that it was one of the most exciting things they saw happening around the URC at the moment. So, watch this space!

