

Course Objectives

Main Objectives of The Irish School of Ecumenics (Trinity College Dublin) Education for Reconciliation courses -

- To develop greater understanding between people from the different traditions in local communities
- To raise awareness of and explore key community, religious, cultural, political, social and reconciliation issues
- To empower participants to be actively involved in the practice of reconciliation within local communities
- To promote the practice of equity, diversity and interdependence between the traditions
- To enable participation in the building of an integrated and inclusive civic society through the practice of active citizenship

All of this will take place in a relaxing environment, giving the opportunity to contribute, listen, discuss, learn from others and make new friends.

Participants

This course is open to anyone interested in the subject matter and in improving understanding between the churches and within the local community.

Funders

This course is part-financed by Community Relations Council Core Funding.



www.tcd.ie/ise

Unearthing the Theological Roots of Sectarianism



Six Session Course on WEDNESDAYS

2nd March – 13th April 2011
(excluding 23rd March)

7.30pm - 9.30pm
in

The Coast Road Hotel
28 Scotch Quarter
Carrickfergus

Course Facilitators
Dr Johnston McMaster
Dr Cathy Higgins

Irish School of Ecumenics
(Trinity College Dublin)
Education for Reconciliation

www.tcd.ie/ise/

Hosted by:
Carrickfergus Borough Church Forum
(CBCF)



www.carrickferguschurchforum.org

Programme

Unearthing the Theological Roots of Sectarianism

Wed 2nd March 2011
Personal Experiences and
Churches Shaped by Sectarian History

Wed 9th March 2011
Understanding Sectarianism

Wed 16th March 2011
Sectarian Theologies -
Doctrinal Dogmas

Wed 23rd March 2011
No meeting

Wed 30th March 2011
Sectarian Theologies -
Catholic and Protestant Relational
Consequences

Wed 6th April 2011
Biblical Resources for Overcoming
Sectarianism

Wed 13th April 2011
Local Strategies for Overcoming
Sectarianism

Course Description

The idea of good relations has been seductive or sleep inducing. We have found it easier to transfer attention to the relationship with ethnic minorities. The emerging problem of racism is serious and requires action. But the elephant in the room remains sectarianism and despite a real desire in the community to move forward into a more positive future, this remains a problem that holds us back. It is a problem that cannot be wished away and which requires our ongoing attention.

It is clear that there is a political and religious inability to deal with sectarianism. When the subject is addressed it is often in political and economic terms, and this is necessary. However, at the heart of sectarianism, is a deeper and even more serious issue - theology.

Any accepted definition of sectarianism has religion as a foundational component and it is therefore a fundamental part of the problem. Despite this, too often the subject is explored without any significant attention being paid to its theological roots. To ignore these roots is to ignore the cultural power of the theology which has shaped a community. This remains true, even though many in society have little or no connection to church life. One does not need a faith commitment to engage with sectarian theology or to practice it.

If theology is a fundamental element in the makeup of sectarianism, then people of faith need to move to a place beyond denial, complacency or a sense of powerlessness. The struggle is an ongoing one, but it is not hopeless. It is an issue that needs to be faced squarely and the church has an important role to play. By sharing responsibility for the problem; by gaining a better understanding and recognising it in all its subtly, sectarianism can be unseated from its too often unchallenged place in society and robbed of its power.

To this end, the course will explore in depth the respective Catholic and Protestant theologies which have had divisive and disastrous relational and political consequences - and it is consequences, not intentions that make theologies sectarian. The course will also explore useful faith expressions and local strategies for overcoming sectarianism.

Tear Off Registration Slip

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel No: _____

PLEASE REGISTER:

BY POST TO:
Karen Nicholson
Irish School of Ecumenics
683 Antrim Road
Belfast
BT15 4EG

BY PHONE contact:
Martin Murray (for CBCF), Tel: 07815081714

BY EMAIL:
www.carrickferguschurchforum@hotmail.co.uk

For further information, please contact:
Karen Nicholson
Tel: 048 9077 5010
Email: cenisec@tcd.ie

Course Fees:
Waged £20
Unwaged £10