



# IRISH SCHOOL OF ECUMENICS

Is There A Common Good?

Is The Past Preventing The Future  
And The Common Good?

A Series of Civic Conversations



Session One: 6 February to 16 March 2021  
Session Two: 12 April to 24 May 2021

The Irish School of Ecumenics Trust, which has been involved in cross-community reconciliation programmes in Northern Ireland from the 1970s and Border County programmes since 1998, is celebrating its Golden Jubilee this year. To mark this significant anniversary the school is initiating a community education and research project for Northern Ireland and Border Counties entitled: Is There A Common Good? The framing of the project is around a question to allow the community the opportunity to envision and shape a response. A series of civic conversations will be organised over the next three years exploring the theme. Participants who engage in the conversations will have the opportunity to imagine, discuss and interpret, what a common good might look like. The Irish School of Ecumenics is not providing answers or being prescriptive but putting the question to the community.

In year 1 (2021) we will be addressing the question of the common good in the context of the past history of violence on the island and the challenges for now. In year 2 (2022) the question of the common good will be explored through the lens of the contemporary situation. The final year (2023) will engage more directly with the question as it relates to a future vision. Over the course of the three-year programme, we will be exploring the obstacles to the common good, as well as how to more fully realise the common good for ourselves and others. Insights and learnings from these two series of civic conversations will be reflected on in local community settings and contexts in future community discussions. The programme will be delivered initially through zoom and, when it is safe to do so, will be rolled out for the community in Northern Ireland and Border Counties. It is open to anyone who wishes to contribute to the conversations.

Dr Cathy Higgins (Programme Director)

**Registration information: Please register your interest with Kirstie (kirstie479@hotmail.com). On receipt of this email, you will be forwarded a registration form for completion.**

For further information on the Irish School of Ecumenics, please visit the ISE website at: <https://www.tcd.ie/ise/>

## Programme Details

### Civic Conversations Series One

#### **Week 1: Is the Legacy of Partition Preventing the Future and the Common Good?**

**Professor Francis Campbell**

Date: Saturday 6 February 2021

Time: 11:00 to 12:30

#### **Week 2: Learning from 'The Troubles': Shaping a Common Good Future**

**Lord Alderdice**

Date: Monday 15 February 2021

Time: 19:30 - 20:45

#### **Week 3: Sectarianism: The Roadblock to the Future and the Common Good in Ireland**

**Professor Duncan Morrow**

Date: Monday 22 February 2021

Time: 19:30 - 20:45

#### **Week 4: Can Our Politics Serve the Common Good and a Shared Future?**

**Mark Devenport**

Date: Monday 1 March 2021

Time: 19:30 - 20:45

#### **Week 5: John Hume: Future Strategist of the Common Good**

**Claire Hanna MP**

Date: Monday 8 March 2021

Time: 19:30 - 20:45

#### **Week 6: Irish Churches serving the Common Good: A Future Vision**

**Dr Johnston McMaster**

Date: Monday 15 March 2021

Time: 19:30 - 20:45

The conversations will take place on Zoom and will be facilitated by  
Dr Cathy Higgins and Dr Johnston McMaster

## Session One Speakers



### Professor Francis Campbell

Professor Campbell joined the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) as a member of Her Majesty's Diplomatic Service in 1997. He has worked at the United Nations Security Council in New York, the European Union, and at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) in London and on diplomatic postings overseas. From 1999–2003, he served on the staff of the then Prime Minister Tony Blair, first as a Policy Adviser in the No.10 Policy Unit, and then as a Private Secretary to the Prime Minister. He also served on secondment with Amnesty International as the Senior Director of Policy. From 2005–2011, he served as Ambassador of the United Kingdom to the Holy See. From 2011–2013, he served as Deputy High Commissioner in Pakistan.

From 2013–2014, he was the Head of the Policy Unit in the FCO and Director of Innovation at UK Trade and Investment. From 2014–2020, Professor Campbell served as Vice Chancellor of St. Mary's University in London and also Professor of International Relations. In February 2020, he became the fourth Vice Chancellor of The University of Notre Dame Australia, where he also holds the position of Professor of International Relations.



### Lord Alderdice

John Alderdice is a psychiatrist by profession, but as Leader of the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland, he played a significant role in the negotiation of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. He was the first Speaker of the new Northern Ireland Assembly and then a key figure in the normalization of security at the end of the conflict. He has held many international positions including as President of Liberal International, the global network of more than 100 liberal political parties (now Presidente D'Honneur). Since 1996 he has sat as a Liberal Democrat life member of the House of Lords and was Convenor of the Liberal Democrats in the House during the Conservative/Liberal Coalition. He is currently a Deputy Chairman of Committees and a member of the COVID Select Committee of the Lords. He is a Senior Research Fellow at Harris Manchester College, a Visiting Research Fellow at St Benet's Hall, an Honorary Fellow of the Changing Character of War Centre at Pembroke College and has research affiliations with the Department of Politics and International Relations and the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography in Oxford. He is the Director of the Centre for the Resolution of Intractable Conflict and Emeritus Chairman of the Centre for Democracy and Peace Building in Belfast. He remains directly involved in analysis and interventions in violent political conflicts in various parts of the world and is President of ARTIS (Europe) Ltd (a research and risk analysis company) and Vice-President of the International Dialogue Initiative.



## **Professor Duncan Morrow**

Professor Duncan Morrow is an academic and community activist living in Belfast, Northern Ireland. He has a long history in action research work, in the fields of conflict resolution, Northern Ireland politics and the relationship between religion and politics, including a strong interest in community relations, restorative practice and criminal justice. He is particularly interested in the thought and work of René Girard to the lived realities of violence, peace and conflict.



## **Mark Devenport**

Mark Devenport spent more than three decades reporting on the troubles and the peace process in Northern Ireland for the BBC. As Ireland Correspondent during the 1990s, he covered the paramilitary ceasefires, the Good Friday Agreement and the Omagh bombing. As NI Political Editor for nearly 20 years, he reported on the power sharing deal between the DUP and Sinn Fein and the chequered history of the Stormont Executive. Mark has reported for the BBC from countries such as Somalia, Israel and Sierra Leone and was the corporation's United Nations Correspondent based in New York.



## **Claire Hanna MP**

Claire Hanna is an SDLP Member of Parliament for South Belfast, elected in December 2019. Claire has been actively representing South Belfast since 2011 as a Belfast City Councillor, then as an MLA in the NI Assembly until her election to Parliament in 2019. In the Assembly, she served as vice chair of the Finance Committee as well as on the Public Accounts Committee and the Environment Committees. She chaired Assembly All Party Groups on International Development and the Arts. In Westminster, Claire serves as a member on the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee. Her professional background is in international development, latterly in a policy and education role.



## **Dr Johnston McMaster**

Dr Johnston McMaster is an educator, writer, broadcaster, and international speaker, originally from Portavogie. He was the co-ordinator of the Education for Reconciliation Programme, 1997-2012, with the Irish School of Ecumenics. Following this he was co-designer and educator of the Ethical and Shared Remembering Programme: Remembering a Decade of Change and Violence in Ireland, 1912-1922, with the Junction, Derry from 1912-present. Johnston has lectured on the Dynamics of Reconciliation Module at Irish School of Ecumenics, Belfast and is a lecturer on the Ministry of Reconciliation Module at Church of Ireland Institute, Dublin. He has been the designer and educator of Public Theology at Drumalis, Larne, from 2017-present. He is an Adjunct Assistant Professor at the Irish School of Ecumenics Trinity College Dublin and is a Member of the Council of State of the President of Ireland.

## Civic Conversations Series Two

### **Week 1: Equality Proofing the Future: Human Rights and the Common Good**

**Chief Commissioner Les Allamby**

Date: Monday 12 April 2021

Time: 19:30 – 20:45

### **Week 2: No Future Common Good Without Economic Justice**

**Jamie Delargy**

Date: Monday 19 April 2021

Time: 19:30 – 20:45

### **Week 3: A Green Future: Eco-Justice and the Common Good**

**Tanya Jones**

Date: Monday 26 April 2021

Time: 19:30 – 20:45

### **Week 4: The Common Good and the BME Communities: In Search of an Inclusive Future**

**Chief Commissioner Geraldine McGahey OBE**

Date: Monday 10 May 2021

Time: 19:30 – 20:45

### **Week 5: Teaching Hopefulness for the Future: Mental Health and the Common Good**

**Professor Siobhan O'Neill**

Date: Monday 17 May 2021

Time: 17:00 – 18:00

### **Week 6: Valuing a Common Good: Re-Imagining a Just and Shared Future**

**A Conversation with Chancellor Mary McAleese**

Date: Monday 24 May 2021

Time: 19:30 – 20:45

Once again, the conversations will take place on Zoom and will be facilitated by  
Dr Cathy Higgins and Dr Johnston McMaster

## Session Two Speakers



### Chief Commissioner Les Allamby

Les Allamby is a solicitor and formerly the Director of the Law Centre (Northern Ireland). He was appointed honorary Professor of Law at the University of Ulster last year and is a trustee of the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland. He was a former Chair of an Advisory group to the Human Rights Commission on proposals for economic and social rights within a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. He was also formerly the Chair of the Social Security Standards Committee for Northern Ireland, a member of the Legal Services Commission (Northern Ireland) and a member of the Legal Services Review Group. He has undertaken election monitoring for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and International Organisation for Migration in Bosnia, Pakistan, and Georgia. Les was also a former Chair of the immigration subgroup (OFMDFM) and a former member of the Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership (Home Office). The Chief Commissioner was appointed in September 2014 for an initial five-year term. His second term will last for two years until 31 August 2021.



### Jamie Delargy

During a lengthy broadcasting career with UTV, Jamie Delargy worked as a Current Affairs Editor and Features Editor before assuming the position of Business Editor. In that latter role he has interviewed many individuals prominent in commerce, industry, administration and politics in Northern Ireland. He now runs a website focused on energy and climate change in particular. Jamie is twice winner of the NI Business Journalist of the Year award. In addition to an MA in Philosophy from Cambridge University he has an MSc in Finance and Investment from Ulster University.



### Tanya Jones

Tanya Jones lived in County Fermanagh for over ten years, where she was a chair of the Fermanagh Churches Forum, founder member of the Fermanagh Fracking Awareness Network and candidate for, and briefly deputy leader of, the Green Party in Northern Ireland. She moved to Dundee in 2018 to study environmental law and is still there, researching for a PhD in the application of restorative justice to climate injustice. She has also worked as a solicitor in Yorkshire, and teacher in Tuscany and County Clare, and is the author of several novels, books about chess and the blog [greenlassie.com](http://greenlassie.com).



## **Chief Commissioner Geraldine McGahey OBE**

Geraldine McGahey OBE, was appointed the Chief Commissioner for the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in March 2020. Prior to this Geraldine was a former Chief Executive of Larne Borough Council, and SOLACE gender champion. Geraldine is currently a member of the Northern Ireland Parades Commission and a Non-Executive Director in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust.



## **Professor Siobhan O'Neill**

Siobhan O'Neill is a Professor of Mental Health Sciences at Ulster University, and Interim Mental Health Champion for Northern Ireland. Her research programmes focus on trauma mental illness and suicidal behaviour in Northern Ireland, and the transgenerational transmission of trauma. She is now on a mission to improve the mental health of the people of NI by promoting evidence-based services and care for those who suffer from mental illness and suicidal thoughts. As Interim Mental Health Champion for Northern Ireland, she will advise and assist in the promotion of mental health and wellbeing through all policies and services throughout the province. Her role is as a public advocate for mental health, and to be a voice for those otherwise voiceless. Her goal is to communicate the collective voices of people with lived experience and their families and carers, and to advocate for communities impacted by mental health inequalities.



## **Chancellor Mary McAleese**

Mary McAleese was born in Belfast and her family was seriously impacted by paramilitary attacks which cemented her lifelong commitment to non-violence, anti-sectarianism, interreligious dialogue, reconciliation and human rights. Mary graduated in Law from the Queen's University of Belfast in 1973 and was called to the Bar of the Inn of Court of Northern Ireland and the King's Inns Dublin. In 1975, she was appointed Reid Professor of Criminal Law, Criminology and Penology at Trinity College Dublin. She trained as a current affairs journalist with RTE. In 1987, she was Director of the Institute of Professional Legal Studies at Queen's. In 1994, she became the first female Pro-Vice Chancellor of the Queen's University of Belfast. In 1997 Mary became the first President of Ireland from Northern Ireland. She served in that office from 1997 to 2011 pursuing a theme of reconciliation through Building Bridges. Post-Presidency, Mary graduated with a Licentiate and Doctorate in Canon Law from the Pontifical Gregorian University Rome. In 2018 she was appointed Professor of Children, Law & Religion at University of Glasgow and in December 2019 she was inaugurated Chancellor of Trinity College Dublin.