



# Christians for an Ethical Society Canberra

*A Working Group of the Social Justice Commission of the NSW Ecumenical Council & associate member of the ACT Council of Churches*  
President - Reverend Professor James Haire

www.ces.org.au  
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**MEDIA RELEASE**

## Higher Loyalty when my country is wrong

"Duties are being imposed on servants of government that infringe their conscience and the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family", declared leading Australian churchman, Rev. Professor James Haire AC, Professor of Theology at Charles Sturt University and Director of the Public and Contextual Theology Centre in Canberra.

"No Government should ever require its servant to engage in the charade described by the migration agent on SBS Dateline of pretending to process the claims of asylum seekers when in fact the detention camp is designed to be nothing more than a deterrent."

It is unacceptable that any government should seek to counter innate human altruism towards desperate fellow human beings by a restricted and manipulated flow of information that serves to depict them as less than human.

"As the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court puts it, the delicate mosaic of our better nature is easily shattered. Demonisation of the outsider has been a ploy resorted to for political gain, leading to unimaginable atrocities to children, women and men that deeply shock the conscience of humanity."

This evening Prof. Haire is speaking to the challenging theme of "Overturning Tables, Knocking off Heads of State and other ways of being Responsible Christian Citizens".

He describes how internationalism and theological subversion are two elements of Christianity. They set higher standards for governments and citizens. He will trace how the Jesus Movement within Judaism, a tiny oppressed and despised minority, rapidly became internationalist in outlook. "It was," he observed, "the first organisation in history to do so."

In contrast, nation-states are Johnny-come-latelies: the product of the Renaissance/Reformation. Loyalty to them is a largely Protestant idea.

The assertion that Christians should meekly obey the State is in fact countered by Church history including that of the early church.

Christianity began by being subversive. Jesus overturned the tables in the Temple. In Nazi Germany we have Dietrich Bonhoeffer's involvement in the plot to rid his country of Hitler.

Calling governments to account has buttressed Nuremburg principles and the International Criminal Court.

Christian loyalty is tested by the narrow national selfishness of current Western liberal nation-states when merely a collective exercise in common, mutually-advantageous, economic selfishness.

*Time of forum:* 7:30pm, Wednesday 26 Feb 2014

*Venue:* Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, cnr Kings Ave & Blackall St, Barton

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