



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
PO Box 5079, Hughes ACT 2605
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OVERSEAS AID AS SHARED LEARNING

From a \$90 trillion dollar world economy, it would cost only \$100bn, a mere fraction of what many governments outlaid to bail out banks during the Global Financial Crisis, to provide every urban dweller around the world with clean running water and sanitation.

- "Don't therefore say that we can't afford overseas aid" said Paul Porteous who will speak this evening at a forum of Christians for an Ethical Society on overseas aid as shared learning.
- Mr Porteous, who is the executive director of the Centre for Social Leadership, has had many challenging experiences including as Senior Adviser to the President of Madagascar and in other trouble spots. He brings experience as a former senior Australian diplomat. He has also been Visiting Faculty at Harvard Kennedy School and a Fellow at Harvard's Center for Public Leadership.
- "Overseas aid is the expression of our values and commitment towards reducing inequality."
- He explained that poverty is a choice. It is determined by the priorities we set as a community, as nations and as a global system.
- Mr Porteous lamented that visions of budget surpluses seem to have captivated people's imagination, resulting in significant cuts to overseas aid.
- He questioned whether "a 'winner' and 'loser' mindset is the only way to make progress on overseas aid?"
- "We need to reframe the overseas aid debate as shared learning about how we live on the same planet. Increasingly, communities and nations need to adapt to new situations they have never faced before."
- Aid is not a stand-alone issue. It is linked to international relations, social inequality, economic stability and environmental threats.
- He stressed that this requires leadership to move away from just solving problems to instead focus on expanding our global problem-solving capacity.
- That means we need to see overseas aid as an opportunity for "shared learning" rather than project-based solutions. Development is something which occurs in a country – not something we create and then export to the developing world. He urges us to approach challenges with a mindset of questioning, discovery and learning, not just off-the-shelf answers dictated by ideology divorced from reality.

Time of forum: 7:30pm, Tuesday 13 May 2014

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

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