



The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good

By William Easterly

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An informed and excoriating attack on the tragic waste, futility, and hubris of the West's efforts to date to improve the lot of the so-called developing world, with constructive suggestions on how to move forward.

William Easterly's *The White Man's Burden* is about what its author calls the twin tragedies of global poverty. The first, of course, is that so many are seemingly fated to live horribly stunted, miserable lives and die such early deaths. The second is that after fifty years and more than \$2.3 trillion in aid from the West to address the first tragedy, it has shockingly little to show for it. We'll never solve the first tragedy, Easterly argues, unless we figure out the second.

The ironies are many: We preach a gospel of freedom and individual accountability, yet we intrude in the inner workings of other countries through bloated aid bureaucracies like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank that are accountable to no one for the effects of their prescriptions. We take credit for the economic success stories of the last fifty years, like South Korea and Taiwan, when in fact we deserve very little. However, we reject all accountability for pouring more than half a trillion dollars into Africa and other regions and trying one "big new idea" after another, to no avail. Most of the places in which we've meddled are in fact no better off or are even worse off than they were before. Could it be that we don't know as much as we think we do about the magic spells that will open the door to the road to wealth?

Absolutely, William Easterly thunders in this angry, irreverent, and important book. He contrasts two approaches: (1) the ineffective planners' approach to development-never able to marshal enough knowledge or motivation to get the overambitious plans implemented to attain the plan's arbitrary targets and (2) a more constructive searchers' approach-always on the lookout for piecemeal improvements to poor peoples' well-being, with a system to get more aid resources to those who find things that work. Once we shift power and money from planners to searchers, there's much we can do that's focused and pragmatic to improve the lot of millions, such as public health, sanitation, education, roads,

and nutrition initiatives. We need to face our own history of ineptitude and learn our lessons, especially at a time when the question of our ability to "build democracy," to transplant the institutions of our civil society into foreign soil so that they take root, has become one of the most pressing we face.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

No one who attacks the humanitarian aid establishment is going to win any popularity contests, but, neither, it seems, is that establishment winning any contests with the people it is supposed to be helping. Easterly, an NYU economics professor and a former research economist at the World Bank, brazenly contends that the West has failed, and continues to fail, to enact its ill-formed, utopian aid plans because, like the colonialists of old, it assumes it knows what is best for everyone. Existing aid strategies, Easterly argues, provide neither accountability nor feedback. Without accountability for failures, he says, broken economic systems are never fixed. And without feedback from the poor who need the aid, no one in charge really understands exactly what trouble spots need fixing. True victories against poverty, he demonstrates, are most often achieved through indigenous, ground-level planning. Except in its early chapters, where Easterly builds his strategic platform atop a tower of statistical analyses, the book's wry, cynical prose is highly accessible. Readers will come away with a clear sense of how orthodox methods of poverty reduction do not help, and can sometimes worsen, poor economies. (*Mar. 20*)

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review As the dictator of Haiti for decades, Papa Doc Duvalier had good reasons--tens of millions of them--to praise international aid agencies for their generosity. As a former analyst in the World Bank system that coordinates such generosity, Easterly thinks it is time to start listening to people other than corrupt dictators and self-congratulatory bureaucrats in assessing international-aid projects. Though he acknowledges that such projects have succeeded in some tasks--reducing infant mortality, for example--Easterly adduces sobering evidence that Western nations have accomplished depressingly little with the trillions they have spent on foreign aid. That evidence suggests that in some countries--including Haiti, Zaire, and Angola--foreign aid has actually intensified the suffering of the poor. By examining the tortured history of several aid initiatives, he shows how blind and arrogant Western aid officers have imposed on helpless clients a postmodern neocolonialism of political manipulation and economic dependency, stifling democracy and local enterprise in the process. Easterly forcefully argues that an ambitious new round of Western aid programs will help the suffering poor only if those who manage them wake up from the ideological fantasy of global omniscience and begin the difficult search for piecemeal local approaches, rigorously monitoring the results of every project. Proffering no blueprint for bringing poverty and disease to an end, Easterly does set the terms for a debate over how to give foreign aid a new start. *Bryce Christensen*
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Review

Easterly asks the right questions, combining compassion with clear-eyed empiricism. -- *New York Times Book Review*, March 19, 2006

Users Review

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Millicent Doty:

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David McMillian:

The book untitled The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good contain a lot of information on that. The writer explains her idea with easy approach. The language is very simple to implement all the people, so do not necessarily worry, you can easy to read the item. The book was published by famous author. The author will take you in the new period of time of literary works. It is possible to read this book because you can read on your smart phone, or device, so you can read the book in anywhere and anytime. If you want to buy the e-book, you can wide open their official web-site along with order it. Have a nice examine.

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