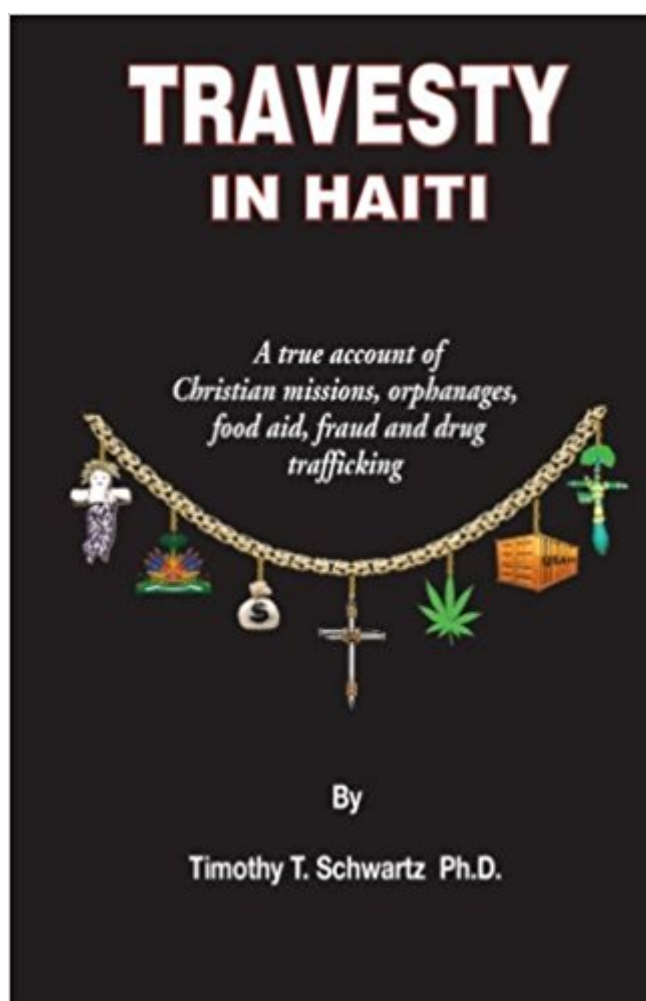


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Travesty In Haiti: A True Account Of Christian Missions, Orphanages, Fraud, Food Aid And Drug Trafficking



Synopsis

TRAVESTY is an anthropologist's personal story of working with foreign aid agencies and discovering that fraud, greed, corruption, apathy, and political agendas permeate the industry. It is a story of failed agricultural, health and credit projects; violent struggles for control over foreign aid; corrupt orphanage owners, pastors, and missionaries; the nepotistic manipulation of research funds; economically counterproductive food aid distribution programs that undermine the Haitian agricultural economy; disastrous social engineering by foreign governments, international financial and development organizations--such as the World Bank and USAID-- and the multinational corporate charities that have sprung up in their service, CARE International, Catholic Relief Services, World Vision, and the dozens of other massive charities that have programs spread across the globe, moving in response not only to disasters and need, but political agendas and economic opportunity. TRAVESTY also chronicles the lives of Haitians and describes how political disillusionment sometimes ignites explosive mob rage among peasants frustrated with the foreign aid organizations, governments and international agencies that fund them. TRAVESTY recounts how some Haitians use whatever means possible try to better their living standards, most recently drug trafficking, and in doing so explains why at the service of international narcotraffickers and Haitian money laundering elites, Haiti has become a failed State. TRAVESTY reads like a novel. It takes the reader from the bowels of foreign aid in the field; to the posh and orderly urban headquarters of charities such as CARE International; to the cold, distant heights of Capitol Hill policy planners. The journey is marked by true accounts involving violence, corruption, appalling greed, sexual exploitation, disastrous social engineering, and the inside world of drug traffickers. But TRAVESTY it is not a novel. It is founded on 15 years of academic and field experience, research, and hard data. It entertains the reader with vivid first hand accounts while treating seriously the problems inherent not only in international aid, but the sabotaging effects of the drug war on economic development in remote and impoverished areas of the hemisphere.

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Customer Reviews

Timothy T Schwartz earned a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Florida and then went to live and work in Haiti for six years. His research included 15 months living with impoverished Haitians in the thatch-roofed huts of a remote fishing hamlet and three years residing in agricultural settlements and villages. He worked as a consultant for international aid agencies, including the German foreign ministry (GTZ), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), French ID (Initiative Developpment), and CARE International, the world's largest international charity. Since leaving Haiti he has been living in the neighboring Dominican Republic where he works as an international consultant specializing in Haitian-Dominican relations and coordinates social impact assessments for private companies. His studies have been funded by the National Science Foundation, the Curtis Wilgus Foundation and the University of Florida College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Recent publications include the Haiti entry for an encyclopedia of world cultures, *Countries and Their Cultures* (Macmillan Reference USA: Yale University), an article in the refereed *Journal for Research in Economic Anthropology* entitled *Pronatalism and the Economic Utility of Children in Jean Rabel, Haiti*, and an article published in the Caribbean's oldest and most prestigious journal, *New West Indian Guide*, entitled *Subsistence Songs: Haitian 'tÃ©at' performances, gendered capital and livelihood strategies in Jean Makout, Haiti*.

I must admit that I expected not to like this book. I felt compelled to read it. I expected a cynical and arrogant review of Christian missions. I expected a self-righteous, omniscient review of well-meaning aid activities in Haiti. What I read was a thoughtful, honest and fair review of all subjects touched upon. I have worked in Haiti over the past 25 years and I have seen a lot of good things happen but more frequently have witnessed waste, graft and failure. The author doesn't generalize beyond his experiences. He does accurately depict events in an interesting and entertaining matter. It seems so many books written about Haiti reek of personal agenda. Travesty in Haiti is a definite exception. I will certainly recommend this book to others!!! Well done!!!!

One of the most accurate looks at Haiti I have found so far. This should be required reading for all mission and development students and an absolute MUST READ for anyone hoping to carry out mission work specifically in Haiti. Any church organization sending aid to Haiti would benefit greatly from reading it as well, but I would caution them to read all the way to the end - through to the final appendices. If you do not, you risk being disillusioned and withdrawing all help entirely.

This book tells the TRUE story of the deep, dark evil behind the so-called charities that are in Haiti supposedly to help the poorest of the poor. Profiteers, every one of them. Read like a true-crime book and I guess that's what it really is, except there are so many criminals, you can't pinpoint who's the worst. I couldn't put it down.

Travesty in Haiti is very informative. It challenges the ideas of traditional foreign aid, especially food aid. It has little bearing on the book, but I think the publisher did a rush job. The spine is flipped so that the title reads reverse of other books, and there are occasional spelling errors. Because of the spelling and publishing errors, I would typically discredit a book such as this, but Schwartz has been featured in other books and documentaries like Poverty Inc. on Netflix, that I believe these are real experiences and observations.

This is a rambling polemic that doesn't know if it wants to be an adventure novel or a serious piece of research, tumbling the reader through a disorganized narrative with confusing time-lines and references, leaving in doubt what is real and what is "creative license." From a young cigar-smoking, hard drinking adventurer in the hinterlands of Haiti to international authority on national development may be a bit of a leap for some of us. At least that is the conflicted image, right or wrong, that Schwartz presents. Since this is a review based on the Kindle edition, one star is knocked off the top for poor formatting (font is too small, graphics don't appear at all), and for too many typographical errors, which may or may not be due to poor format conversion. It was the subtitle of this book that hooked me, because I worked for some of the agencies vilified. For four years I provided health care to the poorest of the poor in Haiti, albeit in a totally different part of the country. (Geographical references are hard to pin down, with some real and some apparently fictitious names used). My time in Haiti also predated the author's experience by several years, having endured the ouster of the Duvalier regime during my tenure. The project I was most heavily involved with was a joint venture with a large NGO. I was recruited to fulfill a vacancy in this ongoing venture, and I soon saw that it wasn't a very well conceived project. Nonetheless, in my little corner

of the world, I saw none of the abuses which Schwartz alleges. That said, I was aware of the larger picture to some extent, and what has unfolded in the years since, as recounted in this expose, does not surprise me, as heartbreaking as it is. Having learned some of the Haitian mindset and cultural milieu, it is all tragically plausible. I saw a whole network of beautiful clinics built throughout the countryside. I was at first delighted. Then, I realized that there was no plan whatsoever to staff and supply them! Empty. But, I'm sure they looked good on someone's report. I saw a lot of other misguided projects - all with good intentions, but ignorantly conceived and clumsily conducted. We had some good ones, too, like seeding some small income-generating projects that were locally generated and run. Health care was tricky, because we were almost always limited point of care activity which had no lasting impact. My successor tried to develop a rural community health care network, but relied on Haitian volunteerism and a model of remote administration. I knew as soon as I heard about it that it was due to fail. (The author talks about the lack of institutional memory, of which this is an example). There are a few asides in which the author acknowledges the good that missions and relief organizations have done, but for some of us who have known good, honest, dedicated, compassionate, sacrificing people who have given so much (and in many cases accomplished much) for the Haitian people, these crumbs seem meager fare. Once we get beyond the shock value of this book, buried in the appendix, are the author's recommendations for solutions to these deep and complex issues. Some of them are quite good, such as working with the maritime sector. Especially essential is some sort of independent, accountable, central coordinating agency for NGO and GOH development. Is this even possible? In these recommendations, the author does not address at all the two most salient features of the landscape that mitigate against any of this - the inbred corruption, greed, and deceit of the Haitian system (and of many of the NGOs) and the pervasive alliance with the illicit drug business. Any workable, comprehensive plan has to address these two issues head on. This book can be read with great benefit by anyone interested in Haiti, or in international aid and development in general. Just be aware that you have to wade through a lot to get to the truth.

This is the most revealing book I have read in ages. I tend to follow the think-globally-act-locally model, and this author has revealed so many of the grant scams and political spoilers of progress that go on in Haiti, Anytown, USA and elsewhere. The author's relentless observations and honesty beg for open dialogue at home. The irony that his efforts made such little impact, but he did reveal how-it-really-is, not only in Haiti, but pockets everywhere. I agree, a major publisher really should pick this up. It is an important book, and I applaud his bravery for staying in the belly of the beast for

so long. I wish it were required reading for students. It begs so much discussion. I love Haiti and wish it well.

If you want to know how the world really works, read this book. Read about how food aid often puts native farmers out of work. Read about NGO's that do more harm than good. Read about rampant graft in foreign aid programs. Read about how people pretend to care about the poor, but don't bother to check whether their programs actually work.

This book certainly opens your eyes to charity and the functioning of a third world. I wish we would have read this during my MPH program as opposed to the many materials of creating interventions that now seem like a total scam.

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