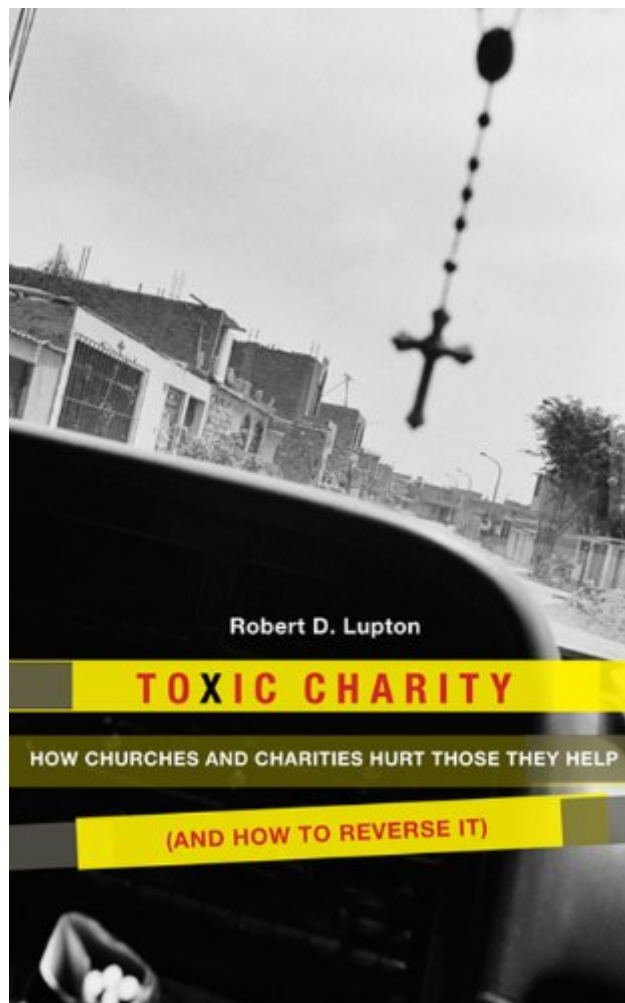


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# Toxic Charity: How The Church Hurts Those They Help And How To Reverse It



## Synopsis

Veteran urban activist Robert Lupton reveals the shockingly toxic effects that modern charity has upon the very people meant to benefit from it. Toxic Charity provides proven new models for charitable groups who want to help "not sabotage" those whom they desire to serve. Lupton, the founder of FCS Urban Ministries (Focused Community Strategies) in Atlanta, the voice of the Urban Perspectives newsletter, and the author of Compassion, Justice and the Christian Life, has been at the forefront of urban ministry activism for forty years. Now, in the vein of Jeffrey Sachs's The End of Poverty, Richard Stearns's The Hole in Our Gospel, and Gregory Boyle's Tattoos on the Heart, his groundbreaking Toxic Charity shows us how to start serving needy and impoverished members of our communities in a way that will lead to lasting, real-world change.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I bought this because I was beginning to see how much our Christian charity was doing more harm than good to people. After 50 years of so many food giveaways and free this and free that, and

missions trips to faraway lands to ostensibly 'help' the less fortunate, instead we have taken the dignity away from the people and made them beholden to Christian (and secular) charity, so much so that they cannot do anything on their own. Tomorrow morning they are the same as they were before we 'helped' them. This book confirmed what I already was feeling, and offered some useful insights into what TO do, and what NOT to do. See also Robert Lupton's book *Charity Detox*, the follow up to *Toxic Charity*.

This is a MUST read book for any one or any group that is involved with charity. I was truly impressed with the clear and understandable way Robert D. Lupton explained the idea and concept of giving and helping the less fortunate. *Toxic Charity* is a must-read book for those who give or work with charities. This book gives examples and solutions in an understandable way. I was truly impressed. So often we give, thinking that we are making a positive contribution when it is totally the contrary. Before you join a group, be sure that EVERYONE, AND I MEAN EVERYONE reads this book. It is one of the best!

While I think this book has a glaring blind spot for those in poverty who are truly unemployable and ill served by a paucity of available programs for mental illness and addiction in our particular state (NH), I like the author's focus on neighborhood empowerment and in-place community development in relationship with current residents over gentrification. I appreciate his scathing critique of charitable programs who ride their buses into poor neighborhoods, assert their feel-good will on the community, and then leave without ever forming a relationship with or asking a question of an actual resident or stakeholder. I will be reading this with a church group. I expect that we'll change our approach to a few things after this, or at least refine our approach to new programs.

The Oath for Compassionate Service

- Never do for the poor what they have (or could have) the capacity to do for themselves.
- Limit one-way giving to emergency situations.
- Strive to empower the poor through employment, lending, and investing, using grants sparingly to reinforce achievements.
- Subordinate self-interests to the needs of those being served.
- Listen closely to those you seek to help, especially to what is not being said
- "unspoken feelings may contain essential clues to effective service.
- Above all, do no harm.

Lupton's book provides considerable food for thought. If supporting non-profits or if one is

associated with a non-profit distributing funds, an on-going process of vetting to ensure there is progress is necessary. However, there are times when pure charity is needed. Our diocese and church read the Toxic Charity to help us discern the best balance. Paul Theroux's Dark Star Safari provides another optic on how best to help the needy. Although not all of Toxic Charity's examples are valid, the author provides a good starting point for discussion.

Over all a good book. A little "right leaning" for my taste, but helpful when discussing Christian community development. Last couple of chapters are especially good because they get into application...early chapters of the book are a bit frustrating because they are heavily based on the experience of the author and community development is picked apart without offering many solutions (which are covered in the end)

Our small group all read this before attending a workshop on this topic by Mr. Lupton. It very well prepared us for the workshop and for better understanding the complexity of its many issues.

I would recommend this book for anyone to read but especially for those who have helped in churches, charity, or mission trips. I also recommend this for anyone who is planning on studying abroad or who has previously done so. It truly does give an eye opening perspective on how these things could be hurting communities we think we are helping depending upon our actions. It not only provides this perspectives but also provides example of not only how it could be hurting rather than helping but also how to change our actions to truly helping.

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