



Western Empires, Christianity and the Inequalities between the West and the Rest

Sampie Terreblanche

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The acute problem of inequality in the world was brought centre stage by the sensational appearance of French economist Thomas Piketty's bestselling book *Capital in the Twenty-first Century*. In *Western Empires, Christianity, and the Inequalities between the West and the Rest 1500-2010*, Sampie Terreblanche studies the matter from a political economic perspective, and brings five centuries of global history to bear in his focus on global, as opposed to internal national, inequalities. The unprecedented accumulation of wealth in the Western world has come at a dire cost to the Restern world (a term the author coins), and empire-building is at the root of it. The last 500 years have seen successive epochs of empire followed by war and systemic chaos. During this time, the "haves" of world history have systematically channeled global resources towards the West through cunning and conquest - a process in which Christian missionary societies played a key role as the soft avant-garde, followed by the hardware. The book deals with several concepts of empire, and the forces through which empires have been rolled out through history: arms, money, ideology, religion. What fed into the Eurocentrism and notion of superiority which paved the way for a lamentable history of slavery, exploitation and the unremitting accumulation of wealth and power? The book shows how clearly dangerous a world we live in, with the scales as precipitously tipped as they are. Ten years in the writing, and in many ways the apex of this decorated author's life work, *Western Empires* is a book for everyone who wishes to understand, or address, the extreme concentration of wealth in the hands of the global few and the hopeless poverty of the many.

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