



Independent

NEWSLETTER OF THE INDEPENDENT INSTITUTE

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The Power of Independent Thinking

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Answering the Call to End Poverty

By Robert M. Whaples



Pope Francis has renewed the world's attention on how we might uplift the lives of the poor. His invitation for an open dialogue about free-market capitalism and government anti-poverty campaigns should be welcomed by people of all creeds. In this regard, economists have much to offer in overcoming confusion over causes and solutions as my colleagues and I explain in our recent book, *Pope Francis and the Caring Society*.

Our first lesson is a simple, under-reported fact: Absolute poverty around the globe is not a growing problem, but a diminishing one.

In 2015, the World Bank announced that the rate of extreme poverty—defined as earning less than \$1.90 per day—had dropped below 10 percent for the first time in history. More than one billion people since 1990 have escaped dire impoverishment.

It is no coincidence that poverty had fallen the most in countries that have adopted more market-friendly reforms, namely China, India, and Indonesia.

This points to our second lesson: the causal link between economic freedom and higher standards of living.

When voluntary exchange and private-property rights are vigilantly protected, the economic system becomes an engine of opportunity, enabling people to work their way up the ladder, including by starting their own businesses. The resulting additional wealth in turn gives people greater ability to give to those in need.

Lesson 3: Private charitable giving tends to be far more efficient and effective than government welfare programs funded with confiscatory taxes. This is partly due to competition: Philanthropies often must compete for donor funds, and to succeed they must demonstrate positive impacts. In addition, people respond to taxes by working less and becoming less productive.

Pope Francis is justified in calling for us to create a more caring world—but government redistribution has shown that it isn't up to the task.

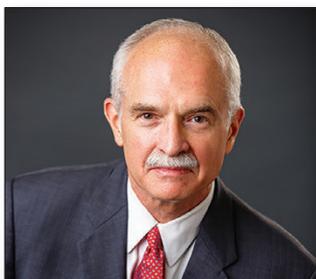
At a time when modest market-based reforms have enabled hundreds of millions of people to lift themselves out of poverty, let us take one step further. Let's make even greater progress in fighting poverty by offering people more freedom to create—and voluntarily share—their prosperity.

Pope Francis earns our gratitude for urging the world to help the less fortunate realize their birthright of dignity and well-being. The best way make that happen, however, is to respect the blessing of economic liberty.

Robert M. Whaples is Research Fellow at the Independent Institute, Professor of Economics at Wake Forest University, co-editor of *The Independent Review*, and editor of *Pope Francis and the Caring Society* (Independent Institute, 2017).

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Milestones for Liberty



DAVID J. THEROUX
Founder and President

Since our founding in 1986, the Independent Institute has been deeply privileged to work with many top scholars and policy experts, and in the process, we have won over 70 book and film awards.

Now comes another prize-winner, *China's Great Migration: How the Poor Built a Prosperous Nation* by Independent Research Fellow **Bradley M. Gardner**, a former East Asia correspondent for *The Economist* now with the U.S. State Department.

In April it scored the best winning combination we've ever had for one of our books—two prestigious awards: the **IPPY Gold Medal for Best Book** in Political/Economic/Foreign Affairs (awarded by Independent Publisher) and the esteemed **Benjamin Franklin Award**

for **Best Book** in Political/Current Events (awarded by the Independent Book Publishers Association).

China's Great Migration tells the story of how people interacting voluntarily through their own initiative and market-based enterprises—rather than bureaucratic central planners—are the engines of wealth creation and economic progress. Over the course of three decades, the book explains, 260 million people left China's countryside in search of urban jobs, forcing the government to back off on its many restrictions and to begin recognizing the property rights and new enterprises.

From 1981 to 2011, the resulting urbanization helped pull 753 million Chinese out of poverty. Simply put, history's largest migration spurred its greatest economic transformation.

Our newest book, *T.R.M. Howard: Doctor, Entrepreneur, Civil Rights Pioneer*, by Independent Research Fellows and historians **David T.** and **Linda Royster Beito**, also tells a powerful story of transformation (see p. 3). The book explores the life of T.R.M. Howard through his humble beginnings in Kentucky, medical education in California, and successful career as a surgeon

and business leader in Mississippi and Chicago, to his calling as one of America's most inspirational civil rights leaders.

Dr. Howard founded black community organizations, organized civil rights rallies and boycotts, championed free enterprise, critiqued Big Government and socialism, mentored Medgar Evers, fought the Ku Klux Klan, and helped lead the fight for justice for Emmett Till, Rosa Parks, and many others. With a foreword by Pulitzer Prize Finalist and two-time Polk Award-winner **Jerry W. Mitchell**, this tribute to Dr. T.R.M. Howard is long overdue.

These books tell remarkable stories of courage and can inspire and instruct all of us today! We invite you to join with us to further the journey, advancing liberty-based emancipations from government folly—and building a better future—by becoming an Independent Member. With your tax-deductible membership, you can receive a **FREE** copy of *China's Great Migration*, *Pope Francis and the Caring Society* (p. 1), *T.R.M. Howard* (p. 3), *The Independent Review* (p. 5), and other publications, plus additional benefits (see envelope).

We look forward to working with you to advance all that only a free society provides!

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NEW BOOK

Remembering an African-American Champion of Liberty



Theodore Roosevelt Mason “T. R. M.” Howard excelled in every realm he pursued, be it hunting, medicine, public speaking, entrepreneurship, opinion journalism, or political activism. His remarkable story has never been told better than in *T.R.M. Howard: Doctor, Entrepreneur, and Civil Rights Pioneer*, by historians **David T. and Linda Royster Beito** (Independent Institute, 2018).



Born into poverty in 1908, Howard used his quick mind and boundless energy to become one of the great renaissance men in U.S. history.

At a time when government-backed segregation curtailed opportunities for African-Americans, he became a surgeon and founded hospitals and medical associations, launched business enterprises that made him one of the wealthiest black men in Mississippi, and mentored or inspired black civil rights activists such as Medgar Evers and Rosa Parks.

In the 1950s, Howard created a civil rights movement in the Mississippi Delta that featured mass rallies, campaigns against police brutality and disfranchisement, and a statewide boycott. He even drew the wrath of J. Edgar Hoover, who denounced him in an open letter for criticizing the FBI’s refusal to investigate the murder of 14-year-old Emmett Till.

In 1956, the *Chicago Defender* awarded Howard the top spot on its annual national honor role. But Howard and his family increasingly faced death threats and economic pressure. In speeches and writings, he put forward the now-proven theory that more than two people took part in Till’s murder.

He continued to push for reopening of the case.

After moving to Chicago in 1956, he founded the profitable Howard Medical Center on the South Side and served as president of the National Medical Association, the black counterpart of the American Medical Association. In 1958, he ran for the U.S. House of Representatives as a Republican against the powerful black Democratic incumbent William L. Dawson, a close ally of Chicago mayor Richard J. Daley.

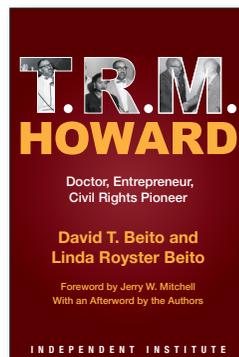
Meanwhile, Howard helped found the Chicago League of Negro Voters, which nurtured the black independent movement of the 1960s and 1970s. In 1965, Howard chaired a Chicago committee to raise money for the children of the recently assassinated leader Malcolm X.

“T.R.M. Howard was a towering freedom fighter. Too often forgotten! The powerful and insightful book, *T.R.M. Howard*, corrects the historical record and keeps his precious memory fresh for us!”

—Cornel R. West, Professor of Public Philosophy, Harvard Divinity School

Dr. Howard founded black community organizations, organized civil rights rallies and boycotts, championed free enterprise, critiqued Big Government and socialism, and fought the Ku Klux Klan.

Meticulously researched and lucidly written, *T.R.M. Howard* tells a captivating story offers hope and inspiration as Americans consider the next steps for securing liberty and justice for all.



For more information, see www.trmhowardbook.com

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Independent Institute in the News

Center on Entrepreneurial Innovation

“No, Trump’s tariffs won’t cost the American economy jobs, but they will make us poorer and less efficient. There is nothing great about that.”

—**Benjamin Powell** in *Fortune*, 3/7/18

“This is why the Communist government sees the growth of Christianity as a threat. To maintain its control, the state must demand devotion to the government above all else, particularly above the defiant and subversive ideas of devotion to faith, family or individual liberties.”

—**Adam Summers** and **Lawrence J. McQuillan** in *U.S. News & World Report*, 3/2/18

Center on Law and Justice

“American students deserve better than to be placed in ‘gun free’ killing zones. They deserve better than to live in an authoritarian regime in which only the military, the police and criminals possess firearms. And they deserve to live in a society in which all provisions of the Bill of Rights are respected, where those who claim to be law enforcement actually do their jobs, and where they are protected in fact from those who would do harm.”

—**Stephen P. Halbrook** in *The Sacramento Bee*, 2/28/18



STEPHEN P. HALBROOK ON
FOX NEWS CHANNEL, 2/20/18

Center on Educational Excellence

“California’s current education system, which largely rations education based on where a child’s parents can afford to live, is a relic of a bygone era. Such a system cannot provide the customized preparation students need. In contrast, tax-credit ESAs would empower parents and guardians to personalize their child’s education, and would foster an educational landscape that can quickly adapt to meet the diverse needs of students and their families.”

—**Vicki E. Alger** in
The Orange County Register, 1/24/18

Center on Health and the Environment

“Fortunately, even the FDA offers a compromise between urgency and safety. From 2005 to 2014, the FDA approved 99.3 percent of expanded-access applications. These applications, similar to right-to-try laws, also offer patients access to unapproved medical products. When the FDA itself recognizes that complete approval isn’t necessary, who could argue it is?”

—**Raymond March** in *The Hill*, 2/13/18

Center on Peace and Liberty

“When you try to spend money that fast, you just end up wasting it,” said Eland, the author of *Eleven Presidents: Promises vs. Results in Achieving Limited Government*. “People with the most political power get the most money.”

—**Ivan Eland** in *The Washington Post*, 2/9/18

Center on Global Prosperity

“It is premature to speak of a firm free-market trend in Latin America. We can more accurately say that the region, which on average has experienced no economic growth since 2013 in part due to statist policies, has the chance to embark on a whole new beginning — if Colombians, Mexicans, and Brazilians do the right thing in 2018.”

—**Alvaro Vargas Llosa** in *The Hill*, 1/3/18

Center on Culture and Civil Society

“At a time when even modest market-based reforms in many of the world’s most repressive nations have made historic progress in helping the poor lift themselves out of poverty, let us then continue on the benevolent path to alleviate poverty by offering people the freedom to create—and voluntarily share—their increased prosperity.”

—**Robert M. Whaples** in
Investor’s Business Daily, 1/26/18



ROBERT M. WHAPLES ON
C-SPAN’S WASHINGTON JOURNAL, 3/10/18

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THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW

New Opportunities for a Free Society

The Independent Review is a unique resource for helping readers learn about cutting-edge ideas and policy reforms that can transform lives.

Here’s a look at two articles from our Spring 2018 issue.

Blockchain and the Voluntary Society

Voluntary efforts at funding ‘public goods’ (i.e., services with benefits that spill over to the population at large) often fall short due to the free-rider problem. This claim, at least, is a standard argument in support of coercive taxation to fund various government services, such as property-rights enforcement, dispute adjudication, national security, and local law enforcement.

Could new technologies improve the prospects of voluntary collective action, enabling public goods without the heavy hand of the tax man? Yes, answer Troy University economists **Malavika Nair** and **Daniel Sutter** (“The Blockchain and Increasing Cooperative Efficacy”).

The blockchain, for those who haven’t heard, is the digital backbone that supports Bitcoin and similar computer-based currencies. Like a constantly updated accountant’s ledger, the blockchain records every transaction conducted with Bitcoin and makes this history available to anyone in the Bitcoin network. This transparency makes up for the lack of a third-party enforcer.

Although the blockchain was invented to serve Bitcoin, entrepreneurs are developing other uses that overlap the realm of traditional government services. Examples include contract enforcement, automated contracts, regulation of corporations, assurance contracts, dispute resolution,



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SPRING 2018

and property-title registry. By facilitating peer-to-peer trust, the blockchain thus offers tremendous potential to facilitate the funding of public goods voluntarily.

The news gets even better: the blockchain might even directly help curb government abuses. “For example, distributed ledgers might help document and detail actions taken by elected representatives and bureaucrats, making the granting of crony favors much easier to discover and penalize politically,” Nair and Sutter write.

Measuring Global Attitudes Toward Capitalism

Is the free-market paradigm winning or losing the long-run contest for people’s hearts and minds? The question has real-world consequences because today’s attitudes shape tomorrow’s institutions.

Surprisingly, given the importance of the issue, measures of attitudes toward the market economy have been lacking. Economic historian **Carlos Newland** seeks to remedy this shortcoming with an index he has created that allows researchers to quantify the commitment of a country’s population to free-market ideas (“Is Support for Capitalism Declining

around the World?: A Free-Market Mentality Index, 1990–2012”).

Newland’s index tracks the public’s attitudes about (1) the merits of competition, (2) the desirability of expanding private ownership of business and industry, and (3) whether or not people view wealth creation as a positive-sum game.

Unfortunately, according to Newland’s Free-Market Mentality Index, the capitalist system has been losing popular support around the globe for two decades. Compared to the 1990s, “much of the world has shifted to a greater faith in government intervention and regulation,” Newland writes.

Worded differently, advocates of economic liberties have new opportunities to improve people’s understanding of how competition, individual rights, and wealth creation improve lives. Help us educate others by giving someone a subscription to *The Independent Review*.

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INDEPENDENT ABROAD

Unique Voice in Latin America and Beyond

Independent Institute focuses largely on transformative public-policy change in the United States, but we also strive to shine the light of peace, enterprise, and opportunity around the world.



Our leading international outreach program is our Spanish-language website and blog, which bring pro-liberty ideas to countries where these views might otherwise not be seen. As of early May, our website *El Instituto Independiente* www.elindependent.org featured 1,678 Spanish translations of commentaries articles from our English website.

Our Spanish-language blog, *Voces de Libertad*, www.independent.typepad.com, has nearly 50,000 posts. Since its inception in November 2005, it has drawn almost 7 million viewers. Along with promoting Independent's work, the blog publicizes the views of Latin American scholars on a host of issues affecting the region.

As of early May, the website and blog have 26,089 followers on Facebook and 4,313 followers on Twitter. The top 10 countries from which visitors come are: Venezuela, Argentina, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Columbia, Spain, USA, Chile, and Uruguay. We look forward to reaching new audiences after we launch our Spanish page on Instagram.



GABRIEL GASAVE IN SAN NICOLÁS
ON SN DEBATE, 12/6/2017

Independent Institute Research Fellow **Gabriel Gasave**, who runs our Spanish website and blog (and has been translating our articles into Spanish since January 2003), also discusses liberty, peace, and prosperity at various academic events and media appearances in Latin America. These include radio and TV shows in Argentina, Bolivia, and Guatemala on topics as varied as unemployment policy, Argentina's elections, Venezuela's turmoil, and the effects of U.S. policies in the region.

During the past year, Gabriel's speaking engagements included program on economic education at a high school in the suburbs of Buenos Aires, a seminar on the market process at the prestigious CEMA University, a lecture inspired by the brilliant French essayist Frédéric Bastiat on "What Is Seen and What Is Not Seen in Economics" for a workshop on economic journalism, and a talk on free-market principles in the city of San Nicolás. His presentation "How to Broadcast the Message of Liberty" was the closing talk at the Students for Liberty (SFL) Latin America summit in Buenos Aires.



STUDENTS ENJOY CAMRADERIE
AT LIBERTY WORKSHOP

The Spanish translation of his article "Venezuelans Worldwide Vote Against Maduro's Power Grab" (written with our Senior Editor Carl Close) was published on numerous pro-liberty websites in Latin America (as well as in *USA Today*). His paper on the life and work of the great Austrian School economist Ludwig von Mises (who gave a series of influential lectures in Argentina in 1959) will be published in a forthcoming book *Freedom Thinkers* and as articles in *Comercio*, the magazine of the Guayaquil Chamber of Commerce in Ecuador.

The past year brought great change to Latin America as many countries replaced populist governments with more pro-market ones (Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Chile) while conditions in Venezuela continued to worsen. With your help, Independent's impact in the region will continue to grow and improve lives.

ENGAGING ISSUES

Improving User Engagement for Greater Impact

Independent Institute’s supporters often see themselves as ambassadors for a more peaceful, prosperous, and free society—diplomatically engaging their family members, friends, and communities on matters of timeless principles as well as the leading topics of the day.

To help improve their understanding and influence, Independent has overhauled the Issues Directory of our website.

Now it is easier than ever for our website visitors to explore the thousands of op-eds, journal articles, policy reports, book summaries, reviews, and other publications that we have produced since our inception more than 30 years ago—and to select appropriate material to share with their social networks, make use of in Letters to the Editor, and draw upon for other grassroots efforts.

The Issues Directory overhaul began a few years ago, when we realized that our then-number of 66 subject categories was too large and sprawling for visitors to navigate efficiently. After internal discussion with staff, we conceptualized the new structure. The scores of diverse topics would be nested in 13 broader “parent” categories:

- Culture and Society
- Defense and Foreign Policy
- Economy
- Education
- Energy and Environment
- Entitlements and Welfare
- Government and Politics
- Healthcare
- International Economics and Development
- Law and Liberty
- Philosophy and Religion
- Regulation
- Taxes and Budget

We have drafted descriptions of each issue, identified special contributions of our fellows, and highlighted content especially helpful for engaging a diverse audience of students, academicians, business people, opinion leaders, community organizers, and policymakers.

Our Issues overhaul is part of our ongoing effort to inspire and equip “communities of impact.” To give us feedback or learn how to become a more effective ambassador of peace, prosperity, and liberty, please contact Development Director Stephanie Watson at swatson@independent.org or 510-632-0824.

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- Food Stamps
- Medicare, Medicaid, and Obamacare
- Social Security
- Welfare

The Lighthouse Society Offers Insight and Influence



Like a beacon illuminating a rocky shoreline, the supporters who comprise our Lighthouse Society play a crucial role in furthering the Independent Institute's mission.

The Lighthouse Society offers our member community a unique opportunity for greater impact, by helping to create transformational policy ideas that address today's most pressing social and economic challenges while advancing individual liberty and free societies.

Lighthouse Society members also enjoy special benefits and customized experiences, such as complimentary admissions to our thought-provoking Independent Policy Forums, some with reserved seating.

At higher levels of giving, members are invited to attend quarterly briefing calls with Independent Institute leadership, one-on-one meetings with Independent staff, an annual dinner with our Board of Directors and special guests, and more.

This year we've added a new giving circle—the Catalyst Circle—to better engage Lighthouse Society members under age 40 who are eager to enjoy unique benefits and fellowship.

Regardless of their level of giving, all Lighthouse Society members receive *The Independent* quarterly newsletter, our peer-reviewed quarterly journal, *The Independent Review*, all newly released Independent Institute books, and our semi-annual *Independent Thought: A Digest of Media*—a collection of our topical, often hard-hitting commentary.

If you would like to learn more about membership with Independent Institute's unique Lighthouse Society, please contact Stephanie Watson, Development Director, at swatson@independent.org or call 510-632-0824.

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