



{bookreview}

The Board's Literary Critic
Dr. Owen A. Anderson

The Economic Dependency Trap: Breaking Free to Self-Reliance by Calvin Helin (Ravencrest Publishing, 2011)

Calvin Helin, a director of The Vancouver Board of Trade and author of *Dances with Dependency: Indigenous Success through Self-Reliance*, recently launched his new book at a gala reception in Richmond. Several hundred enthusiastic people attended to hear music, poetry and speeches from guests representing communities in Canada, Hawaii, New York and New Zealand.

The key speech was delivered by Peter Newman, editor of the book and himself author of twenty-five books. Newman assessed this new book as "revolutionary."

Peter is one who chooses his words carefully. And when he says this book is revolutionary, we should all take note. You will need imagination and a desire for policy and legislative change to grasp the implications of this book.

What Helin is proposing is a revolution. It is not incrementalism. It is not tinkering and reforming an exhausted system and outdated concepts of "do gooding" which pervades our thinking.

Helin's thesis is that society has fallen into four disastrous dependency traps:

- i) Government to citizen - the "social safety hammock." This leads to too much government and destroys discipline and work ethic.
- ii) Government to government - equalization payments and transfers to tribal governments are examples of creating debilitating dependencies in the recipients.
- iii) Intra-family - spoiling the kids: the phenomenon of kids never growing up.
- iv) Intra-organizational - the poverty industry that creates vast bureaucracies "to help."

We need to get ourselves and our society out of these horrible traps which will ultimately destroy us.

Helin argues for private property and incentives for home ownership as one policy lever among many to fix this situation.

This is a delightful and enjoyable (but not politically correct) book written with courage and thoughtfulness by Helin. It calls on us to re-imagine the fundamental importance of self-reliance.

If you go to spiritorca.com you can also order cedar boxes and cloth bags for wrapping your books; a nice touch from this talented family for your Christmas presents.

What are other Vancouver Board of Trade members up to? They have been active not only running their businesses but publishing books too.



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