

# NEWS RELEASE - draft

## New book explores key ideas of the Enlightenment

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For immediate release

**VANCOUVER**—A new book about the Enlightenment, the intellectual and philosophical movement, based largely in Europe, that spawned the rise of reason and the scientific method, was released today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

The [\*Essential Enlightenment\*](#) also includes a website and animated videos, which summarize key aspects of the research in an accessible format.

“The Enlightenment’s key ideas of liberty, freedom, limited government and separation of church and state helped shape revolutionary experiments in government in the United States and France, which helped change the world,” said the book’s editor Aeon J. Skoble, professor of philosophy at Bridgewater State University and senior fellow with the Fraser Institute.

Prior to the Enlightenment, which began in earnest in the late-1600s, religious and political absolutism dominated Europe. But these ideas—rights, freedoms, liberty—represented a new way of thinking about government and directly challenged the power of monarchs and the church.

Indeed, governments and church leaders banned many of the radical ideas of the movement’s well-known thinkers, which included Baruch Spinoza, Montesquieu, John Locke and Immanuel Kant. Yet ultimately, these ideas lay the foundation for the liberal democratic institutions we take for granted today including impartial courts and the rule of law, democratically elected governments, equality for all people and freedom of speech.

Finally, in addition to significant changes in philosophical and political thought, Enlightenment thinkers such as Adam Smith and David Hume also introduced radical new economic ideas about market economies and increased prosperity, which helped spark even greater change across Europe and North America.

At [www.essentialenlightenment.org](http://www.essentialenlightenment.org), you can download the complete book and individual chapters for free and view several short videos summarizing key points of individual chapters. The videos are also available on the Fraser Institute’s YouTube [channel](#).

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