

# ACTON notes

Acton Institute Newsletter

May / June 2018, Volume 28, Number 3

# Annual Dinner

OCT. 17, 2018

*“connecting good intentions with sound economics”*

## In This Issue

- Timothy Keller to keynote Acton’s 28th Annual Dinner
- Venezuela: Latin America’s socialist nightmare • More growth for Acton Alumni group

# President's Message

As I write this, we are in the run-up to Acton University 2018, our signature markets and morality event that brings together more than 1,000 people from all over the world. It is my hope that all of our faculty, staff and attendees recognize the full sweep of what we offer each year. Namely, educating and expanding the numbers of what Edmund Burke termed "little platoons."

"It is the first link in the series by which we proceed towards a love to our country, and to mankind."

For those unfamiliar with Burke's concept, I refer you to his *Reflections on the French Revolution*, which also is highly recommended summer reading for high school and college students. The historical event referenced in Burke's title is among the first uprisings against oppressive regimes that resulted in something worse than what sought to replace.

Anarchy, chaos and cruelty became the order of the day. The disordered passions of humankind violently surfaced as the Reign of Terror displaced the promise of ordered liberty.

"Turbulent, discontented men of quality, in proportion as they are puffed up with personal pride and arrogance, generally despise their own order," wrote Burke. "One of the first symptoms they discover of a selfish and mischievous ambition is a profligate disregard of a dignity which they partake with others."

So was it in 1790s France as it is throughout the world today. Forces with a variety of agendas attempt to trample our hard-won liberties in pursuit of vaguely defined goals claiming egalitarian outcomes. This ignores the ample empirical evidence that humans thrive most when left in large part to their own devices in an ordered society that protects basic freedoms of speech and religion as well as property rights. The statist impulse thrives and must be fought at every turn.

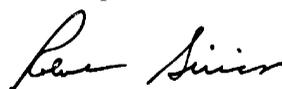
"The little platoon we belong to in society," said Burke, "is the first principle (the germ as it were) of public affections. It is the first link in the series by which we proceed towards a love to our country, and to mankind. The interest of that portion of social arrangement is a trust in the hands of all those who compose it; and as none but bad men would justify it in abuse, none but traitors would barter it away for their own personal advantage."

Burke's description might be a little long for an official Acton University mission statement, but it applies remarkably well – as it does for all our daily efforts year-round.

The mission of the Acton Institute is to promote a free and virtuous society characterized by individual liberty and sustained by religious principles.



Sincerely,



Rev. Robert Sirico, President

**ACTON**INSTITUTE

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# Timothy Keller to keynote Acton's 28th Annual Dinner

Mark your calendars! Rev. Timothy Keller will deliver the keynote address at this year's Annual Dinner on Wednesday, October 17, at the J.W. Marriott Hotel in downtown Grand Rapids. There will also be a special address from Acton president and co-founder, Rev. Robert A. Sirico.

As the founding pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City, Keller is known for his vibrant ministry promoting faith in an urban culture. His books, including the *New York Times* bestselling *The Reason for God* and *The Prodigal God*, have sold over 1 million copies and been translated into 15 languages. The Center for Faith and Work, an outreach arm of the church he founded, focuses on connecting people to the gospel in and through their day-to-day work—a theme he will be speaking on when he joins Acton and our supporters this fall.

Acton's Annual Dinner is the largest single-day

gathering the Institute hosts, drawing nearly 1,000 attendees each year. This event is both a celebration of the partnership Acton has with our supporters, as well as a rallying cry to continue promoting the ideals of a free and virtuous society.

“Acton's Annual Dinner is the largest single-day gathering the Institute hosts, drawing nearly 1,000 attendees each year.”

In addition to single-seat tickets at \$175 per person, Acton is offering two levels of sponsorship for the Annual Dinner. A Liberty Circle sponsorship (\$3,500) includes premier seating for a table of 10 and recognition on our website, the event program, and event

marketing. Lord Acton's Circle (\$7,500) includes all of the above, along with complimentary drink tickets and two tickets to a private cocktail reception with Rev. Keller and Rev. Sirico. There are a limited number of tickets available for the Annual Dinner—secure your spot today!

For more information or to reserve your tickets, please visit [www.acton.org/dinner](http://www.acton.org/dinner), call 616.454.3080 or email [NPorter@acton.org](mailto:NPorter@acton.org).



Rev. Keller will deliver the keynote at this year's Annual Dinner.

## From Our Conference Participants

Working with the poor and underprivileged in society, through Acton, I have been instrumental in starting businesses as mission and direct give initiatives whose drive is empowering and liberating the community.

—Timothy K  
Fort Myers, FL

Acton Institute was one of the most influential and rich educational experiences I have ever had. I especially loved the foundation classes as a first timer. The information I received in those classes has had a direct impact on my own teaching.

—Hannah H  
Joplin, MO

## Venezuela: Latin America's socialist nightmare

Last year, four out of 10 Venezuelans had property or money stolen. Hardly surprising since Venezuela was the least secure out of 144 nations, according to the most recent Gallup Law and Order Index.

Chaos in Venezuela is creating a power vacuum, pulling regional and global powers into the South American country. Brazil has long attempted to become the regional leader and to guide other South American countries into prosperity, but has failed to properly respond to the socialist threat. Instead, as German scholar Oliver Stuenkel argues, Brazil has become an enabler of Maduro's government. Brazilian firm Odebrecht was recently convicted of bribing South American governments in return for construction contracts, according to the BBC. The U.K. broadcaster reported that the bribes totaled hundreds of millions of dollars and stretched from Mexico to Argentina. The pattern is consistent: Brazil would rather profit

of working to end Venezuela's oppressive government. As a result, the scope of the problem is now beyond Brazil's resources. Stuenkel argues that Brazil's influence over Venezuela has been surrendered to Russia and China. For instance, Russia and China have called for the United States to respect the results of the 2017 election and Russian banks have aided Venezuela in bypassing U.S. sanctions. Since they are Maduro's last resort, China and Russia now have greater influence in the region.

Tragedy and chaos will continue as long as Maduro remains in power. China and Russia may use their influence in South America to aid the nation but Maduro could become the new Fidel Castro, who was propped up by the Soviet Union for 30 years. Yet if socialism persists, quality of life will continue to fall and people will flee the country. Ultimately, the Venezuelan people will be robbed of any remaining power to act in their own interests. Those who wish to end the suffering can only hope that a democratic solution will present itself. While an expansion of freedom would

# ACTON News



Mérida, Venezuela - October 2016; Credit: Sebastorg / Shutterstock.com  
Protesters march against the Venezuelan government.



Mérida, Venezuela - October 2016; Credit: Sebastorg / Shutterstock.com

from Venezuela's misfortune than to work toward a solution.

Since Venezuela adopted a socialist system in 1999, the number of people fleeing the country has totaled 4 million. Refugees continue to leave the country, placing strain on its neighbors, especially Columbia and Brazil. These countries are not prepared to provide the immediate care which the Venezuelan refugees need and are often not willing to allow them to integrate into society. Brazil has chosen to live comfortably with its socialist neighbor, instead

be contrary to recent authoritarian trends in Venezuela, a reversal would be welcome to many, including those in recent student protests. Venezuela cannot afford to remain in its current state, as its citizens are pushed towards the edge of survival. Even if they were able, its neighbors are unwilling to act, leaving Venezuela under the influence of countries such as Russia and China. This is a failure that all of Latin America may soon regret.

*Noah Gould is a student at Grove City College majoring in Economics and a 2018 Intern at the Acton Institute.*

# More growth for Acton Alumni group

Acton University 2018 is upon us as more than 1,000 people from 80 countries make their way to Grand Rapids to engage the intellectual foundations of a free and virtuous society. This also means that our alumni network will gain nearly 600 new members.

As the Acton alumni network continues to increase in number, we have expanded our alumni program offerings around the globe. In 2017, we hosted 17 regional events with nearly 700 attendees around the United States. We plan to increase this number in 2018 through the efforts of our local alumni ambassadors and partnerships with local organizations. In addition to regional alumni network events, we have continued to experience success connecting individuals in our network to job opportunities at like-minded organizations.

A key resource that has assisted in the growth of our alumni program is the Acton Alumni Association web portal.

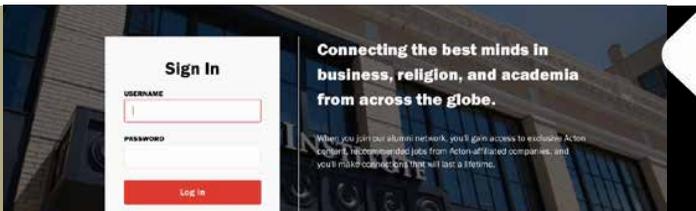
In order to increase the value of the alumni network, we will be adding new functionality and a

significant amount of new content to the Acton Alumni Association web portal at the conclusion of Acton University in June. One of the more significant updates to the web portal will be increased functionality of the alumni network geo-locator, which allows Acton alumni to identify fellow alumni located in their geographic area.

In addition to the above items, the alumni web portal will also provide members with:

- A job board that allows you to search for career opportunities with partners inside our network;
- Regular alumni spotlights that highlight the great work that many in our network are accomplishing around the world;
- Alumni exclusive resources, including webinars, free/reduced cost books, alumni reading groups, and special discounts on Acton media resources.

If you haven't had an opportunity to view the Acton Alumni Association web portal, please take some time and visit [alumni.acton.org](http://alumni.acton.org).



The Acton Alumni Association web portal hosts a significant amount of new content.



## ACTON in the News

“There is a reciprocity, an alignment of our interests with those of others, to the ethics of free trade that is worth aspiring to, even if it is not a magic bullet for a fallen world.”

—Excerpted from Jordan J. Ballor's article  
in *Comment*

### Samuel Gregg

Title: *Miracle Men: How Market Liberals Saved Germany from Economic Catastrophe*  
Publication: *Law and Liberty*  
Airdate: 06.20.18

### Jordan J. Ballor

Title: *Trump's Trade Tirades*  
Publication: *Providence*  
Date: 06.20.18

### Alejandro Chafuen

Title: *Spain: Throwing Out The Baby With The Bathwater*  
Publication: *Forbes*  
Date: 06.20.18

## Reminder

### Help Acton Promote Freedom and Virtue!

The Acton Institute depends on the generosity of supporters like you. If you have not donated to Acton but enjoy *Acton Notes*, please consider helping us meet our goals! Your help makes possible our mission to promote a free and virtuous society. You may choose to donate using the envelope provided, or you may visit the Acton website to make a secure donation online. We send our heartfelt thanks to those of you who have been so generous in the past with your strategic support, as well as your prayers. You have a broad vision and a generous heart.

## INTRODUCE ACTON TO A FRIEND

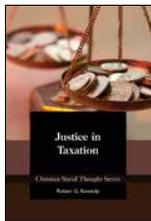
KNOW SOMEONE WHO WOULD BE INTERESTED IN THE WORK OF THE ACTON INSTITUTE? USE OUR WEBSITE TO SEND THEM AN EMAIL WITH INFORMATION ON OUR PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES. THANKS FOR PROMOTING FREEDOM AND VIRTUE!

Visit: [www.acton.org/refer](http://www.acton.org/refer)

## ACTON UNIVERSITY



# ACTON Book Shop

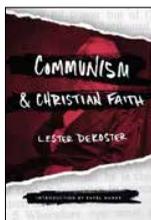


## Justice in Taxation

By Robert G. Kennedy

With its well-rounded enunciation of the moral obligations pertaining to all parties—individuals, associations, and governments—this book enables us to take a large first step toward formulating tax policies that are both sensible and ethical.

**Softcover 138 pages Sale \$6.00**



## Communism & Christian Faith

By Lester DeKoster

In *Communism & Christian Faith*, written at the height of the Cold War, Lester DeKoster offers a concise and incisive guide to the fundamentals of Marxism and draws a clear contrast between Communism and Christianity.

**Softcover 206 pages Sale \$14.95**

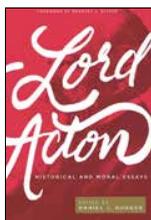


## Foundations of a Free & Virtuous Society

By Dylan Pahman

Creative, quirky, and always winsome, Dylan Pahman builds a systematic case for a positive relationship between a biblical understanding of the human person and the economic flourishing that freedom enables.

**Softcover 168 pages Sale \$14.95**



## Lord Acton: Historical and Moral Essays

By Lord Acton

Liberty is contested because it is complex. It is not merely a concern of political science or economy, an abstract philosophical concept, or a theological doctrine. It is all those things and many things besides; it is, as Lord Acton said, “the delicate fruit of a mature civilization.”

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<a href="#">Lord Acton: Historical and Moral Essays</a>	\$11.95		

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### Calendar of Events

#### ACTON INSTITUTE EVENTS

Date	Event	Location
Aug 6	<b>Economics and Morality</b> Speakers: Victor V. Claar, Ph.D. and Trey Dimsdale, J.D.	Klaipeda, Lithuania
Oct 17	<b>Acton Institute's 28th Annual Dinner</b> Speaker: Rev. Timothy Keller	Grand Rapids, MI
Nov 5	<b>Liberty and Markets Series</b> Colloquium on Liberty and the Intellectual Roots of Modern Market Economics	Grand Rapids, MI