

ACTON notes

Acton Institute Newsletter

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“connecting good intentions with sound economics”

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President's Message

“Without the tireless efforts of our staff and crew, we couldn't boast of Acton's international reach.”

Those present for my plenary speech at the 2018 Acton University (also available for viewing on the videos section at acton.org) witnessed the presentation of some amazing facts. Among those irrefutable nuggets of wisdom I was able to share was this: The Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty has grown from inauspicious beginnings into an international enterprise encompassing some of the greatest thinkers and hardest workers of our modern era.

Every day I am both humbled and impressed by the great works performed by the men and women within and outside the immediate Acton orbit. These works are accomplished by not only those who write, publish and speak under the auspices of our little think tank in Grand Rapids, Michigan, but as well as those who work behind the scenes to ensure our daily operations and major annual events occur without a hitch.

Suffice it to say, we have assembled a tremendous team of courteous and professional individuals. Their works and assistance over the past 28 years created our large archive of works both in print and other media that champions free markets and virtuous behavior. I must humbly assert that the library created by Acton and its associates is among the finest examples of academic research and writing intended for popular audiences.

Without the tireless efforts of our staff and crew, we couldn't boast of Acton's international reach. The number of amazing people we have attracted from every habitable continent and dozens if not hundreds of countries is mind-boggling to those of us who recall our early years when we employed only five individuals.

We live in truly wonderful times. As I also noted in my AU speech, World Gross Domestic Product has soared in recent history. The total output of the world economy, adjusted for inflation and expressed in 2011 international dollars, is more than \$100 trillion. Nearly all this advancement occurred during the past several decades. Imagine a graph documenting the spike in World GDP since the birth of Christ; somewhere after the mid-20th century the line shoots straight up until it truly and indisputably resembles a hockey stick.

As I also noted last June, we've won some sort of lottery. Much of this is attributable to the advancement of human liberty, dignity and economic freedoms throughout the world. Before setting ourselves back to our daily tasks, I want us all to acknowledge that what we here at Acton are doing makes a tremendous difference to the world at large.

Sincerely,



Rev. Robert Sirico, President

ACTONINSTITUTE

98 E. Fulton Street • Grand Rapids, MI 49503 • USA • www.acton.org

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

Acton interns guide net advertising

This summer, Acton recruited a group of interns from around the world. Throughout the summer, Acton's skilled interns helped create advertisements for a wider audience. Three interns hailing from Venezuela, Brazil and Hungary were hired for Acton's emerging leaders program. In addition to these international students, several American interns were skilled in foreign languages and familiar with cultures around the world.

Prior to the Acton internship, Claire Bokma, a development department intern, studied in Jordan, which broadened her knowledge of the languages and cultures in the Middle East. Canaan Harris, an executive office intern, recently spent a summer in Spain and is fluent in Spanish. Through an international business class, development intern Dominique Scalisi made connections around the world and put those connections to use by translating ads into languages such as Arabic and Urdu.

Google offers grants to non-profit organizations to create advertisements using Google AdWords. These are the small text ads that pop up alongside

search results. As a non-profit, Acton receives \$500,000 from Google annually, which is then used to increase Acton's online reach around the world.

Interns were assigned the responsibility of managing Acton's Google AdWords account. The interns created advertisements for Acton's blog posts and targeted these ads to countries around the world in a variety of languages. The top five most successful ads were not in English but rather in Urdu, Spanish and Arabic.

The interns successfully "maxed out" the AdWords account each day, meaning they used the entire allotted daily budgets and left no grant funds unused. The number of people who saw the ads tripled, while those who actually clicked on the ads increased almost 200 percent. They increased the blog's traffic by more than 40 percent and reached over 152,000 people (and counting) solely through strategically targeted ads in a foreign language. The interns used their abilities to reach countries around the world and spread Acton's message to those seeking liberty near and far.



Acton recruited a group of interns from around the world.

From Our Conference Participants

Truly outstanding for resources, information and interaction. Everything gained from Acton has been effectively used in my business, economics and communication classes.

—Michael M
New York, NY

Acton is equipping me with new ideas and convictions to be an effective leader. I met Fr. Robert in June 2017 at AU and was deeply inspired by his journey. I hope I can do that sort of work here in India. I also admire the commitment of the Acton team.

—Rev. John A
India

Pastor and New York Times best-selling author Timothy Keller to keynote Acton's 28th Annual Dinner

Mark your calendars! The Acton Institute is pleased to announce that Rev. Timothy Keller will deliver the keynote address at this year's Annual Dinner on Wednesday, October 17, 2018, 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 best-selling *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 News



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

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 donors, as well as a rallying cry to continue promoting the ideals of a free and virtuous society.

In addition to single-seat tickets at \$175, 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, as well as in the event program and 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. Timothy Keller and Rev. Robert Sirico. A limited number of tickets are available for the Annual Dinner—secure your spot today!

For more information, visit www.acton.org/dinner, call 616.454.3080 or email NPorter@acton.org.

Justin Welby reimagines a poorer and less free Britain

Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, is no exception. In his book *Reimagining Britain: Foundations for Hope*, Welby sets out to create a new social and political vision for the United Kingdom based on the common good. The most precise definition Welby offers is that the common good “looks not to averages but to the totality of flourishing in a group.” He outlines a list of policy and cultural changes, including greater income redistribution and broadening the definition of family to include cohabitation.

Ultimately, for Welby, the common good requires a greater sameness, not only of human opportunity but also of outcome. For instance, he advocates



Justin Welby

Credit: Foreign and Commonwealth Office / Flickr.com

mandating equal housing prices across urban and rural areas, a policy that, by artificially depressing prices in high-demand areas and thereby suppressing the supply of available units, would create widespread housing shortages in cities such as London. Welby's project fails because he does not properly identify the means of producing a society with the greatest degree of human flourishing and the common good. Welby's errors, however, are not primarily economic; rather his missteps concerning morality and human nature plunge him into other problematic prescriptions for society.

Noah Gould, 2018 Acton intern, in a July commentary.

The tragedy of Venezuela's socialism

Today Venezuela has what could be described as an untraditional dictatorship – it takes pains to look like a democracy. Yet it is a totalitarian system. In the words of the congressman Juan Miguel Matheus, it is a cancer that invades each and every area of our social life. In an attempt to show how humane it is, the government recently released more than 50 political prisoners. But the destruction of basic living standards has been severe. In Venezuela, some 12 million people live on a minimum monthly mandated wage that, in April worked out to \$1.61 on the black market exchange rate. Sociologist Maria Gabriela Ponce of the Andrés Bello Catholic University in Caracas estimates that 61 percent of Venezuelans are immersed in extreme poverty. More than 63 percent of Venezuelans have only one daily meal and scenes of people rummaging through the trash on the streets are common. Infant

“The Venezuelan crisis today is the result of more than 40 years of corrupt government and false promises that have created a climate of extreme dependence on the government.”

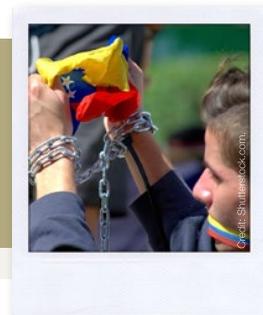
mortality rates have grown exponentially. Because there are no medical supplies or medicines in hospitals, patients with cancer, epilepsy and heart diseases, among others, needlessly die daily. Companies that produce medicine don't have American dollars to buy raw material. Malnutrition is atrocious. But it is the only possible result in a country with more than 3 million children whose futures have been ruined by 21st-century socialism.

The Venezuelan crisis today is the result of more than 40 years of corrupt government and false promises that have created a climate of extreme dependence on the government. With people totally dependent on the government, Chavez and now Maduro could manipulate people as they wanted—keeping a lid on social unrest but destroying human dignity.

Victor Mata, 2018 Acton intern, in a July commentary.



Venezuelan protesters



ACTON in the News

“For this Catalan priest, new taxes are very often the source of riots and upheavals; perhaps there is no other reason that caused them in such greater numbers.”

—Excerpted from Alejandro Chafuen's article
in *Forbes*

Alejandro Chafuen

Title: The Vocation of the Think Tank
Publication: Acceptance speech for 2018 Premio Juan de Mariana
Date: 03.01.18

Alejandro Chafuen

Title: The Good Economic Judgment of Father Jaime Balmes
Publication: Forbes
Date: 07.09.18

Samuel Gregg

Title: James V. Schall Dissects the West via Islam
Publication: Law and Liberty
Date: 08.07.18

Reminder

Help Acton Promote Freedom and Virtue!

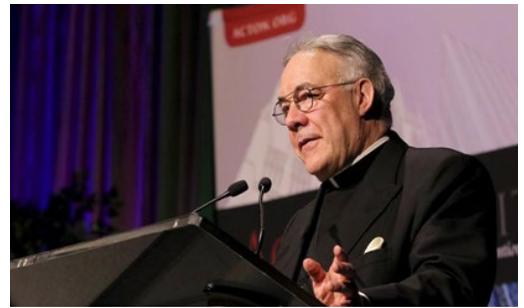
The Acton Institute depends on the generosity of supporters like you. If you have not donated to Acton but enjoy *Acton Notes*, please consider helping us meet our goals! Your help makes possible our mission to promote a free and virtuous society. You may choose to donate using the envelope provided, or you may visit acton.org/donate 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.

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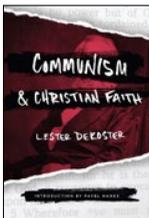


Work: Theological Foundations and Practical Implications

Edited by R. Keith Loftin and Trey Dimsdale

Moving from biblical theology to systematic theology to practical theology, *Work: Theological Foundations and Practical Implications* offers a comprehensive theology of work. With contributions from a variety of leading theologians, including Miroslav Volf and Samuel Gregg.

Softcover 290 pages Sale \$30.00

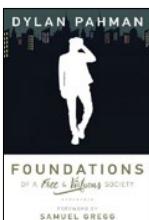


Communism & Christian Faith

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



On the Law of Nature: A Demonstrative Method

By Niels Hemmingsen

In this treatise Hemmingsen argues that all particular rules of ethical conduct can be derived from immutable axioms or first principles. This important treatise looks both backward to classical and medieval philosophy and forward to developments in the 17th century and beyond.

Hardcover 256 pages Sale \$29.95

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| Communism & Christian Faith | \$14.95 | | |
| Foundations of a Free & Virtuous Society | \$14.95 | | |
| On the Law of Nature: A Demonstrative Method | \$29.95 | | |

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Calendar of Events

ACTON INSTITUTE EVENTS

| Date | Event | Location |
|---------------|---|------------------|
| Oct 17 | Acton Institute's 28th Annual Dinner Speaker: Rev. Timothy Keller | Grand Rapids, MI |
| Oct 18 | Business Matters: Meaningful Work in the Modern Age One-day conference with panel discussions, interviews, and a luncheon interview | Grand Rapids, MI |
| Oct 25 | Dallas Luncheon Speaker: Rev. Robert Sirico | Dallas, TX |
| Nov 15 | Liberty and Markets Series Colloquium on Liberty and the Intellectual Roots of Modern Market Economics | Grand Rapids, MI |
| Nov 29 | Liberty in Equality or Constraint: What is the Future of Social Democracy? | Munich, Germany |
| Dec 4 | Freedom, Virtue and the Good Society | Rome, Italy |