

# ACTON notes

Acton Institute Newsletter

March / April 2018, Volume 28, Number 2



*“connecting good intentions with sound economics”*

“Prescott, Washington” by Steve Lenz Photography (Owned by Acton Institute)

## In This Issue

- Latest issue of *Religion & Liberty* takes on green theme
- Alex Chafuen joins Acton to lead international outreach • Can capitalism be saved from conservatives?

# President's Message

By the time this message reaches readers, the dawning of spring will have arrived. Ever since I relocated to Michigan, I've found the season rife with metaphorical opportunities.

"It's a perfect time for sowing the seeds for bountiful crops that will be harvested at a later date."

Of course, I'm not the first to recognize that spring represents rebirth of the Earth and the resurrection of our Lord. "Nature is the art of God," wrote the Italian poet Dante Alighieri in his *Divine Comedy*.

In my humble estimation, never is the complexity and beauty of God's art better displayed in all its myriad glory than in spring. From Chaucer's "Prologue" to his *Canterbury Tales* to the mudluscious and puddle-wonderful observed by E.E. Cummings, the world begins another rotation around the sun and the natural world responds accordingly with warmer temperatures and more verdant landscapes.

It's a perfect time for sowing the seeds for bountiful crops that will be harvested at a later date. For the seeds to germinate in an optimal fashion, however, the soil must be fertile. This holds true as well in the fields wherein we toil at Acton.

First we fertilize and till the soil with our research, shared reading, publications, writings and well-articulated common goals. Our primary goal (or anticipated harvest, if you will) is the acknowledgment of the fundamental dignity of all humankind. How best to attain this includes alleviating hunger and poverty as well as the temptation to succumb to collectivism and other utopian schemes, which behave as weeds in our garden by abrogating freedoms and stifling liberties.

It's also in spring when warmer temperatures cause the conversion of starch stored in maple trees over the winter months into sugar. This sugar sweetens the trees' sap, which is collected and processed into syrup. We at Acton also store research information that we tap into when necessary in order to comment on contemporary issues related to our primary mission.

Finally, spring is typically announced with the loud crack of a bat connecting with a baseball as players take another type of field, otherwise called a diamond. These outstanding players comprise 30 individual teams – each working as one on behalf of their common goals. Our Acton team consists of all our wonderful employees and contributors and, as well, all our readers and supporters competing in the world of ideas and public opinion.

It's spring once again, so let's rededicate ourselves to the Acton mission!



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Robert Sirico". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Robert Sirico, President

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

ACTON INSTITUTE

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## Latest issue of *Religion & Liberty* takes on green theme

For the first issue of 2018, the *R&L* editorial board wanted to put together a very special themed issue. They traveled across the country and talked to many experts to produce essays, interviews, reviews and more focusing on the environment, good stewardship and the importance of property rights.

Director of Communications John Couretas ventured to Bozeman, Montana, and Yellowstone National Park. In “Growing pains in the romance lands,” he describes the difficulties of preserving land while also allowing for businesses to grow and new communities to be built. In an accompanying feature, “Betting the ranch,” Couretas profiles John and Ramona Baden, who put their Montana ranch into a conservation easement.

Also featured is a conversation that took place in Washington state with Todd Myers, director of the Center for the Environment at the Washington Policy Center. This feature looks at dolphin-safe tuna, leaded gasoline and the importance of where people who care about the environment actually live. You can find all that in “A conversation about

the best policies for the environment.”

For the transatlantic sections, you can find an essay from Bishop Dominique Rey about why our language is so important when discussing environmental concerns in “Going back to the grammar of creation.” Philip Booth talks about Pope Francis’ *Laudato si’* and what it’s missing. “*Laudato si’* would have been a more rounded document if it had considered the importance of private property for the protection of the environment,” Booth argues.

Bruce Edward Walker reviews *The Death and Life of the Great Lakes* and discusses why these bodies of water are so important to us in the Midwest.

The “green” liberal tradition is Aldo Leopold, the “father of ecology.” Leopold truly practiced what he preached and used his own land to test conservation and restoration efforts. He spoke about the importance of “individual responsibility for the health of the land” and the importance of private property rights for the good of the land.

This is the first themed issue since last year’s redesign.



© Dan Cook

A shot of Chinook salmon moving upstream from *R&L*'s first theme issue.



John and Ramona Baden from *Betting the ranch* in the new *R&L*.

## From Our Conference Participants

Acton [University] has inspired me to continue my own research and professional development. There is a vibrant (and diverse) community that believes both in caring for the poorest of the poor and promoting free enterprise, a virtuous society and democracy.

—Jarin S  
Austin, TX

Acton [University] connected many dots between my faith and public life, expanding my understanding of what it means to truly live out faith in every way. We have an incredible responsibility to culture, to the poor and to protect freedom in our society, and Acton ... reflects that truth.

—Elise D  
Washington, DC

## Alex Chafuen joins Acton Institute to lead international outreach

Starting at the beginning of the year, Alejandro A. “Alex” Chafuen, longtime president of Washington-based Atlas Network, joined the Acton Institute as its managing director, international.

“As one of our founding board members and earliest supporters, Alex has been an important part of the Acton Institute’s work and mission since day one,” says Acton Institute Executive Director Kris Mauren. “Twenty-seven years later, we are truly honored to bring his invaluable experience and wisdom in the think tank industry to lead our global growth.”

At Atlas Network, Chafuen was instrumental in the organization’s mission of establishing and sustaining a network of free-market think tanks all over the world. Today, Atlas Network connects more than 475 think tanks in 90 countries. In his new role, Chafuen will help Acton expand its growing reach of international conferences, scholarly work and educational projects. In the latest report from

allies of Atlas Network who, for more than three decades, made possible the work of helping start and develop think tanks across the globe. “I feel blessed to be able to join the action at Acton which, like no other think tank, can help us win the moral case for a free economy,” he says.

“Alex Chafuen is a tireless advocate for free markets and individual liberty, and our whole Atlas Network team is full of appreciation for his many accomplishments,” says Atlas Network CEO Brad Lips.

Chafuen joined Atlas Network in 1985 and worked alongside its founder, Sir Antony Fisher. Chafuen is a trustee of Grove City College in Pennsylvania and has been a member of the Mont Pelerin Society since 1980. A graduate of the Argentina Catholic University, he was a professor at the Argentine Catholic University, University of Buenos Aires and The Hispanic American University. Chafuen, who holds a Ph.D. in economics, serves on several boards, including the Chase Foundation of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Fraser Institute in Vancouver, British Columbia, and is on the Member’s Committee of the John Templeton

## ACTON News



Alex Chafuen was one of the earliest supporters of Acton.



Alex Chafuen speaking at Acton's Rome conference.

the University of Pennsylvania’s Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program, Acton was ranked 11th in the top social policy think tanks in the world. At its 2017 Acton University conference in Grand Rapids, Acton welcomed more than 1,100 participants from 87 countries. In Rome on Nov. 29, Acton hosted a conference of 380 scholars, diplomats, clergy and journalists from more than 40 countries. With its headquarters in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Acton also has offices in Rome and in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Chafuen, who was born in Buenos Aires, says he is extremely thankful to the colleagues, donors and

Foundation, the World Charity Foundation and the Templeton Religion Trust.

He is a member of the board of advisers of The Philanthropic Enterprise and was a member of the founding committee of Donors Trust. He is also the president and founder of the Hispanic American Center of Economic Research. Chafuen is a regular contributor to Forbes.com, writing a column called “Intellectual Entrepreneurs,” which focuses on think tanks and policy scholars.

# Can capitalism be saved from conservatives?

The diversity of American conservatism would astound those pundits, politicians and critics who believe conservatism is a rigid ideology aimed at privileging the wealthy (and the white). Peter Kolozi's new book *Conservatives Against Capitalism: From the Industrial Revolution to Globalization* showcases a conservatism uncomfortable with free-market capitalism.

There is no doubt that capitalism is a disrupting force in human history. It rips apart culture, tradition and localism in pursuit of profit and maximum individual freedom. It has been a liberating force in human history but certainly not a system based on egalitarian distribution or favorable to mass democracy. Why would conservatives come to embrace so readily a destructive force like capitalism?

Kolozi rightfully traces the influence of Trump and his call for an America First, nationalist agenda to the capitalist criticisms of paleoconservatives like Samuel Francis and Pat Buchanan. It is doubtful that Trump was influenced directly by either man, but their delineation of an anti-corporate capitalism

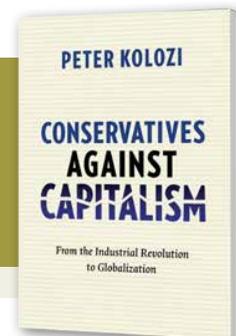
and their propagation of the virtues and values of a Middle American radicalism has given the paleo-conservative disposition the rightful claim of being the intellectual progenitor of Trumpism. But Kolozi notices the appeal of racial nationalism, as paleocons blame the immigrant for the decline of American working-class virtues. White middle-class Americans are privileged in the paleoconservative argument and that appeal won out in Trump's call for America First-styled populism as well.

Kolozi's book is an extraordinary achievement in looking at the *longue durée* of hostility to capitalism on the Right. It is well written, insightful and breezy (196 pages of text). Kolozi is not the first scholar to recognize the anti-capitalist disposition. However, he is the first to place it in context and to extrapolate from it a rooted connection to a conservatism that disdains the free market and has the tendency, at this moment, to reorient the conservative movement away from free-market fundamentalism.

This essay was adapted from a recent Acton Institute commentary.



Theodore Roosevelt addresses a crowd of suffrage delegates from his home in 1917.



## ACTON in the News

“Two hundred thirteen years after Hamilton’s death at the hands of Vice-President Aaron Burr, the very mention of Hamilton’s name still sparks ardent debates and disagreements among conservatives. Hamilton appears destined to be as controversial a figure in our time as he was during his own.”

—Excerpted from Samuel Gregg’s article  
in Public Discourse

### Alex Chafuen

Title: Latinoamérica necesita mejor política monetaria en 80% de sus países  
Program: La Tarde—NTN24  
Airdate: 01.11.18

### Joe Carter

Title: Congress calls for global prison reform  
Publication: World Magazine  
Date: 01.24.18

### Samuel Gregg

Title: Alexander Hamilton: Revolutionary  
Conservative Lawyer  
Publication: Public Discourse  
Date: 02.05.18

## 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.

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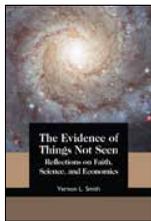
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### ACTON'S ROME CONFERENCE AT PONTIFICAL GREGORIAN UNIVERSITY



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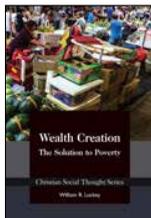


## The Evidence of Things Not Seen

By *Vernon Smith*

Religious and non-religious people alike commonly assert that religion and science occupy two entirely separate and distinct realms. But what if science and religion share something deeply mysterious in common? What if that mysterious commonality is faith?

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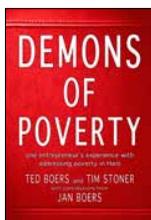


## Wealth Creation: The Solution to Poverty

By *William Luckey*

Care for the poor has been a hallmark of Christianity since its beginning. Yet the economic world that provides the context for both Christianity and poverty has changed dramatically since the time of Christ. Professor Luckey helps us to understand that context by tracing the history of Christian thought.

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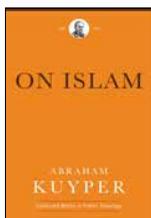


## Demons of Poverty

By *Ted Boers and Tim Stoner*

For ten years, Ted Boers, a well-intentioned, successful entrepreneur, devoted himself to improving the conditions of the poor in Haiti. His journey would take him into many dark places, including a crisis of faith that launched him on a mission to discover what he did not know and wished he had known before he began.

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## On Islam

By *Abraham Kuyper*

*On Islam* compiles Kuyper's significant writings on Islam. This anthology will allow readers to follow Kuyper's model for observing another faith and its cultural ramifications from an informed Christian point of view. It will be of relevance for today's readers—where Islam's role is on the global scene.

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## ACTON notes

### Calendar of Events

#### ACTON INSTITUTE EVENTS

Date	Event	Location
<b>Apr 17</b>	<b>Communism in Cuba</b> Speaker: Juan Suarez	Grand Rapids, MI
<b>Apr 19</b>	<b>Chicago Luncheon</b> Speaker: Rev. Robert Sirico	Chicago, IL
<b>May 8</b>	<b>Detroit Luncheon</b> Speaker: Rev. Robert Sirico	Detroit, MI
<b>Jun 19-22</b>	<b>Acton University</b>	Grand Rapids, MI
<b>Oct 17</b>	<b>Acton Institute's 28th Annual Dinner</b> Speaker: Rev. Timothy Keller	Grand Rapids, MI