

ACTON notes

Acton Institute Newsletter

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President's Message

Wrapping up the last quarter of 2018 grants the opportunity to take stock of where the Acton Institute began and where we're headed. Even though this year's Acton University and Annual Dinner are in the rearview mirror, plans are already well underway for next year's events. It's often an unstated fact that our mission is too important to let our guard down even for one day against the forces of statism as well as economic and religious obscurantism.

"The luck derives from scaling a steep learning curve unscathed when it came to realizing our dream."

When we first conceived of the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty, Kris Mauren and I dreamed big. We wanted an all-star lineup of the best and brightest free-market and religious thinkers to assist us in our mission, and we set out to recruit as many of them as possible. After all, what good is an educational and research organization without the finest talent and sharpest minds available?

Naming all those we endeavored to enlist is impossible in this space, but let's just say we succeeded beyond our wildest imaginings. In this, we were equal parts lucky and fortunate. The luck derived from scaling a steep learning curve unscathed when it came to realizing our dream. We were fortunate because others understood our compelling plan that married free-market economics with sound, theological principles.

Nearly 30 years ago, such a concept was perceived as oxymoronic. Those of us who came of age in the 1960s and 70s were accustomed to separating economics from spirituality. When the two topics were linked it usually meant the message of Judeo-Christianity was depicted as some form of soft socialism. What was needed was an institute that could provide proof from both Biblical and other faith-based texts as well as empirical, scientific research that greater economic freedom results in greater economic prosperity for all strata of society.

Furthermore, our focus isn't primarily focused on the economics of human existence, important though that is. We advocate for a "free and virtuous society," which entails adopting the precepts of Judeo-Christian moral behavior as an overall benefit to civilization at large. When properly understood, "ordered liberty" abjured libertinism while embracing humanitarianism, such as what is depicted in the New Testament parables. The Parable of the Talents, for example, relays not only a potent economic lesson on saving and investment, but also a relevant message concerning virtuous human conduct.

So, readers can be confident that there will be no resting on Acton's past laurels. Our previous accomplishments are but an investment that we anticipate will deliver huge dividends for future freedom and virtuous living.



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.

ACTONINSTITUTE

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Acton launches First Business Matters conference

On October 18, the Acton Institute held the first Business Matters event, a one-day conference that brought together entrepreneurs and business leaders to explore the moral good that business does.

President and co-founder of the Acton Institute, Rev. Robert Sirico, gave the opening remarks, stating that in order to understand how people ought to conduct themselves in business, we should first seek to understand who the human person is, being made in the image of God and entrusted with a mandate. “He who has given us the talents to make the world better expects us to be intelligent, industrious and generous with those talents,” said Rev. Sirico. Through panel discussions, interviews and a luncheon lecture, topics such as the theological underpinnings of work, the role of the entrepreneur and innovation in business were explored.

The conference consisted of three panel discussions and a lunch presentation, with guests such as Phil Sotok, founder and president of DPMC North America, John C. Kennedy III, president

and CEO of Autocam Medical and James Meeks, founder of MOVE Systems. “Work is one area where we can express our purpose,” explained Sotok. “When we go back to the beginning and ask ourselves who we are and what we were meant to do, it becomes about how we live our lives, and work is one part of it. It’s about the whole picture.”

During the conference, an episode of Acton’s short film series “The Good Society” premiered, which explores how the stationery and lifestyle brand, Rifle Paper Co., first began through creativity and innovation. Afterwards, the co-founder of Rifle, Nathan Bond, spoke with Acton research fellow and producer of the documentary film Poverty, Inc., Michael Matheson Miller, about entrepreneurship and leadership in business. “If an entrepreneur creates something in a better way than what’s been created before, people notice. Then it ups everybody’s game and it sharpens everybody,” said Bond. “An entrepreneur creates value for other people. And that’s a crucial part of being an entrepreneur.”



John C. Kennedy and Rev. Robert Sirico at the Business Matters conference.



Nathan Bond and Michael Matheson Miller speak about entrepreneurship.

From Our Conference Participants

I regularly use a variety of Acton’s materials in my classrooms at my university and also at community events.

The sound and balanced nature of Acton’s materials make them top-notch.

—Femi Odebiyi
Lithuania

Acton has helped me greatly in my work as a seminary lecturer to refresh my knowledge and also to acquire new insights which are indispensable for future church leaders.

—Francis Nnaku
Uganda

Rev. Timothy Keller keynotes Annual Dinner

On October 17, the Acton Institute hosted its 28th Annual Dinner. A sold-out crowd consisting of college presidents and faculty, Acton staff and other supporters of Acton enjoyed an evening of dining and fellowship at the JW Marriott in Grand Rapids.

Acton's Annual Dinner is the largest single-day gathering the institute hosts. Every year, Acton staff and volunteers look forward to this time of fellowship with supporters from all over the world and the opportunity to hear from many intellectual heroes.

Margarita Money, an associate professor at Princeton Theological Seminary, gave the evening's opening remarks and prayer. She also introduced the keynote speaker, Reverend Timothy Keller, theologian and founding pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City.

Rev. Keller gave an engaging speech titled "Identity, Business and the Christian Gospel." Keller noted the differences between "traditional identity" and "modern identity" and their implications for

Paul Romer Nobel Prize cheers human potential

Recently, I was telling a colleague that I hoped Paul Romer would finally win the Nobel Prize in economics. And then he did.

I've been a Paul Romer fan since I started teaching intermediate macroeconomics more than a decade ago. Because most economics teaching involves good storytelling, I've thought a lot about how Romer fits into the story of how economic thinking about economic growth has evolved and changed. Professor Romer's theory of long-term growth fits the facts, and also helps us understand that individuals motivate lasting, perpetual growth.

In Nobel laureate, economist Robert Solow's growth model, new technologies "happen." Solow doesn't explain what causes technological change; he merely assumes it, which is what makes Romer's contribution to growth theory meritorious, elegant, and clever. Romer's class of models that endogenize technological advances are alternatively referred to as "new growth theory" or "endogenous growth theory."

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Reverend Timothy Keller gave the keynote at this year's dinner.



Paul Romer

contemporary society, as both cause issues ranging from "workaholicism" to performance-based self-worth in business. Keller ended his speech by stating that only the Christian Gospel supplies the answers to questions of identity.

Afterward, Acton's president and co-founder, Rev. Robert Sirico, addressed the room. He thanked guests for their generous support of the Acton Institute and instilled reminders as to how religious liberty and free market economics work in tandem to bolster the freedom of both the individual and civil society.

All speeches from the dinner are available online at the Acton PowerBlog and Acton's YouTube channel.

And where does Romer say new technology comes from? It comes from you and me. People -- motivated by profit, inquisitiveness, and necessity -- are the drivers of the discoveries that lead to long-term growth. These discoveries can be replicated and extended, and their work never ends. Whether people value professional achievement, fame and fortune, or the feeling of solving a very tough problem, they keep discovering. So according to Romer's growth theories, an economy is like a perpetual motion machine: The ride is rarely smooth, but boy is it thrilling!

This article is excerpted from an Acton Commentary by Victor V. Claar.

Joann Beyer honored for contribution to liberty

On October 2, Joann B. Beyer received Acton Institute's second Guardian of Freedom Award in a ceremony at the Duquesne Club in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. More than 100 guests attended the dinner, including leaders of prominent philanthropic and free market organizations such as Philanthropy Roundtable, the Allegheny Foundation, and the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation.

Beyer is a trustee and former president of the Allegheny Foundation and is also a former member of the board of directors at St. Vincent College. Both Beyer and her late husband Dick were recently recognized as the winners of the Perseverance, Grace, and Purpose Award by the Parkinson Foundation of Western Pennsylvania. Beyer has been a long-term leader in greater Pittsburgh through her involvement with the Scaife Family Foundation and the Allegheny Foundation.

The event's program included remarks from the president of the Randolph Foundation, Heather Higgins, and the chancellor of St. Vincent College, Archabbot Douglas Nowicki. "Joann has certainly

made a great difference in providing resources for every aspect and dimension of this community," said Nowicki.

Acton's co-founder and executive director, Kris Mauren, presented the award sculpture and citation to Beyer, stating "the Acton Institute proudly recognizes you for your leadership in the cause of ordered liberty and constitutionally limited government, and your commitment to the principles derived from faith and reason upon which America was founded." Additionally, Mauren announced that friends and admirers of Beyer have contributed funds in her name, establishing a new endowment in support of fellowships for Catholic leaders to attend special Acton programs. The Joann B. Beyer Fellowships will be a lasting tribute to her leadership and fight for freedom.

The Guardian of Freedom Award was created in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall to recognize the ongoing contributions of leaders who have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to liberty.



Joann B. Beyer received the institute's second Guardian of Freedom Award.



Rev. Robert Sirico speaks about Joann Beyer.

ACTON in the News

"Whatever the details of the Vatican's provisional agreement with mainland China, the Holy See is surely obligated to demonstrate that the arrangements for the selection of Chinese bishops meet Christus Dominus' requirements."

—Excerpted from Samuel Gregg's article
in *The Catholic World Report*

Michael Matheson Miller

Title: Social Media – What a Bummer
Publication: Law and Liberty
Date: 10.22.18

Rev. Ben Johnson

Title: Archbishop Justin Welby:
Amazon Warrior
Publication: The American Spectator
Date: 10.05.18

Samuel Gregg

Title: The China Agreement: Beijing, Rome,
and the Church's Liberty
Publication: The Catholic World Report
Date: 09.23.18

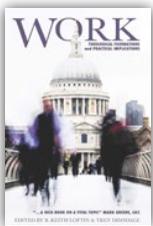


On the Law of Nature: A Demonstrative Method

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 Original Price ~~\$29.95~~ Sale \$17.97

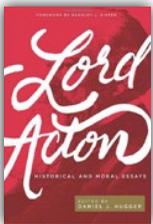


Work: Theological Foundations and Practical Implications

Edited by *R. Keith Loftin and Trey Dimsdale*

Moving from biblical theology to systematic theology to practical theology, this book offers a comprehensive theology of work. With contributions from leading theologians including Miroslav Volf and Samuel Gregg, this book brings together biblical scholars, ethicists, economists representing a spectrum of theological voices.

Softcover 290 pages Original Price ~~\$35.00~~ Sale \$21.00

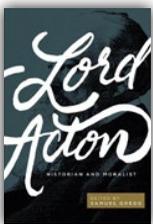


Lord Acton: Historical and Moral Essays

By *Lord Acton*

This collection of Acton's most important historical and moral essays introduces readers to his account of the emergence and impact of the idea of liberty. 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.

Softcover 284 pages Original Price ~~\$14.95~~ Sale \$8.97

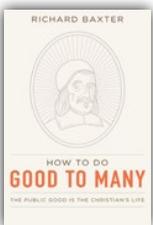


Lord Acton: Historian and Moralist

By *Lord Acton*

The essays in this volume introduce and engage the works and legacy of Lord Acton. Written by some of the world's most respected authorities on Acton, these essays grapple with Acton's ideas about history, morality, politics, religion, and revolution.

Softcover 188 pages Original Price ~~\$14.95~~ Sale \$8.97

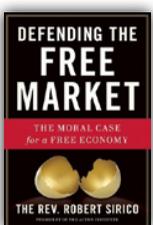


How to Do Good to Many: The Public Good Is the Christian's Life

By *Richard Baxter*

In this work the famed seventeenth-century pastor Richard Baxter provides worthy instruction in the proper valuation of earthly and heavenly goods, including practical and perennial lessons on how to pursue the common good in society.

Coming Soon



Defending the Free Market

By *Robert A. Sirico*

Rev. Sirico argues that a free economy actually promotes charity, selflessness and kindness, and why free-market capitalism is not only the best way to ensure individual success and national prosperity but also the surest route to a moral and socially-just society.

Hardcover 256 pages Original Price ~~\$24.95~~ Sale \$14.97



Rethink Missions Toolkit

Produced by Acton Institute

Join host Michael Matheson Miller on a journey around the world to explore the foundations of human flourishing, and learn how people are moving toward partnerships and pursuing entrepreneurial solutions to poverty rooted in the creative capacity of the human person made in the image of God.

6 Part DVD Series Original Price ~~\$44.95~~ Sale \$26.97

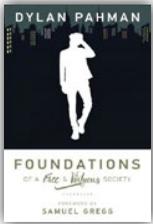


For the Life of the World: Leaders Edition

Produced by Acton Institute

For the Life of the World is an entertaining film series that explores the deeper meaning of salvation. Have you ever wondered, “What is my Salvation actually FOR?” Is it only about personal atonement, about getting to heaven or something that comes later? Is it just to have a “friend in Jesus”?

DVD and Field Guide Original Price ~~\$64.99~~ Sale \$38.99



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. In this book, Pahman presents a crash course in the principles of a free and virtuous society.

Softcover 168 pages Original Price ~~\$14.95~~ Sale \$8.97

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Lord Acton: Historian and Moralist	\$8.97		
Defending the Free Market	\$14.97		
Rethink Missions Toolkit	\$26.97		
For the Life of the World: Leaders Edition	\$38.99		
Foundations of a Free & Virtuous Society	\$8.97		

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Calendar of Events

ACTON INSTITUTE EVENTS

Date	Event	Location
Jan 31	City FAVS A three-day exploration of moral and economic clarity	New York, NY
Mar 28	Liberty & Markets Series Evaluating the Idea of Social Justice - A Liberty & Markets Colloquium	Grand Rapids, MI
Jun 18	Acton University A four-day exploration of the intellectual foundations of a free society	Grand Rapids, MI