

# ACTON notes

Acton Institute Newsletter

September / October 2015, Volume 25, Number 5



*“connecting good intentions with sound economics”*

## In This Issue

- Acton is back 'on tap' • Diet Eman winner of Faith and Freedom Award
- Acton@25 Campaign will wrap up with 25th Annual Dinner

# President's Message

Like me, you are probably wondering where summer went. In Michigan, we revel in long, warm evenings when one can dine *al fresco*, welcome an approaching thunderstorm that cleanses the air, and appreciate the simple pleasure of eating ice cream on the porch.

Yet the leaves begin to change colors and swirl to the ground. It's time for apple cider and football and sweaters.

And then it is winter, with its fierce beauty, and spring and ... the seasons change; the same and yet ever new.

How easy it is to let nature simply exist around us, with us oblivious to its beauty. An excellent topic of contemplation from Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* is artistry in the created world. Pope Francis says (referencing St. Francis of Assisi):

"Through the greatness and the beauty of creatures one comes to know by analogy their maker" (Wis 13:5); indeed, "his eternal power and divinity have been made known through his works since the creation of the world" (Rom 1:20). For this reason, Francis asked that part of the friary garden always be left untouched, so that wild flowers and herbs could grow there, and those who saw them could raise their minds to God, the Creator of such beauty. Rather than a problem to be solved, the world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise.

You may know that I have some misgivings with parts of this encyclical. Pope Francis illustrates great concern for our environment, which is, of course, laudable. However, I see him laying far too much blame on free markets for problems such as air pollution. He appears not to understand that pollution is *lowest* precisely in countries with freer economies. The poor suffer most because they have a chasm of disconnect between themselves and free markets. He even has a name for this. He identifies this as the problem of "inclusion." For instance, many have no choice but to light their homes with anything other than kerosene, which creates harmful soot and breathing problems.

That being said, *Laudato Si'* is a good reminder to take time to contemplate the beauty of God's created world as it is *and* as it can be. In the developed world, we've become a moving mob of necks bent over cell phones. While the poor are disconnected from markets, we are all too often disconnected from nature and one another. We need to remember the lesson of St. Francis of Assisi and once again contemplate God's creation, a world of joyful mystery.



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

"How easy it is to let nature simply exist around us..."

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

98 E. Fulton Street • Grand Rapids, MI 49503 • USA • [www.acton.org](http://www.acton.org)

## Exciting start for Acton on Tap series

Acton's back "on tap"! June kicked off the institute's casual lecture series. These events are a chance for Grand Rapids community members to engage with economic and religious experts in a relaxed but informative environment. Acton on Tap evenings feature a short lecture and allow plenty of time for questions and dialogue from guests. Dan Hugger, Acton's librarian, gave his debut lecture on the institute's namesake, Lord John Emerich Acton. Lord Acton was a defender of liberty, free inquiry, freedom of religion and the broad liberal tradition. In his lecture, Hugger suggested that Acton, both in his life and writings, serves as a model for thoughtful and passionate engagement with the modern world.

In July, Anielka Olson, research and outreach manager of PovertyCure, began her talk by asking the question, "Are we listening to the poor's voices?" She discussed themes found in PovertyCure: helping that hurts, ineffective charity and more.

Jared Meyer, fellow at the Manhattan Institute, gave a talk on millennials to a packed house

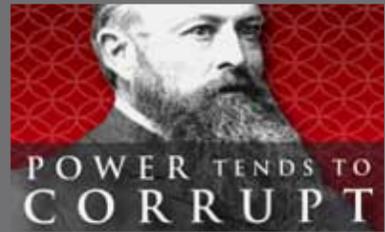
at the end of July. He argued that "millennials need government to get out of the way so we can claim our birthright." Meyer said that millennials are a largely entrepreneurial generation but are unable to follow these dreams because of a plethora of bad policies. He kept the lecture short so he could engage with the audience and answer questions from millennials and other age groups, in attendance.

Dave Hebert, assistant professor of economics at Ferris State University, spoke in late August about government overreach, discussing how government involvement can improve citizens' lives. He also chatted about the areas in which it causes more harm than good.

All 2015 Acton on Tap events were held in downtown Grand Rapids at San Chez Bistro. The lectures and follow-up discussion from most events are recorded and available online at the Acton PowerBlog. Visit Acton's Event Page for information on upcoming Acton on Tap lectures and other events.



Dave Hebert speaks to the Acton on Tap crowd.



Lectures are online at the Acton PowerBlog.

## From Our Conference Participants

[Acton University] has changed my outlook on my ministry as a Christian, my business as a consultant, and even my role as the leader of my family.

—2010 Acton University attendee

It is inspirational to be informed by a group that clearly embodies a common mission, communicated by educators of differing topics.

—2015 Acton University attendee

## Faith and Freedom: celebrating Diet Eman

Dutch resistance fighter Diet Eman will be recognized with the 2015 Faith and Freedom Award for her bravery in the face of the Nazi regime. This honor was established as part of the Acton Institute's 10th anniversary celebration in 2000. The award recognizes an individual who exemplifies commitment to faith and freedom through outstanding leadership in civic, business or religious life. For this award, the institute commissioned a sculpture of Lord Acton, who held firmly to the two pillars of faith and freedom.

Eman will be presented with the sculpture on October 21 at Acton's 25th Anniversary Dinner in Grand Rapids at the DeVos Place. For more information about the event, or if you're interested in reserving a seat or table, please visit [www.acton.org/dinner](http://www.acton.org/dinner).

Few encapsulate the concepts of courage, faith and perseverance quite like Diet Eman. She was born just outside of The Hague, Netherlands, in 1920. During World War II, she was a member of the Dutch resistance, helping secure ration cards for Jews,

Acton is not the first to have recognized her bravery and tireless work upholding the dignity of all people in the face of Nazi tyranny. She was awarded a medal from Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands for her witness against fascism, and in 1998 Yad Vashem named her as one of the "Righteous Among the Nations." This title is used by the State of Israel to describe the non-Jewish people who risked their lives to save Jews from extermination during the Holocaust.

Eman made headlines in West Michigan earlier this year when King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima of the Netherlands visited Grand Rapids in June. The brief time they spent visiting was a celebration of the cooperation between the state of Michigan and the Netherlands, most especially regarding economic ties and trade relations. Diet Eman was formally introduced to the king and queen and accompanied them for many of the festivities. Part of the day's events included attending "It Is Well," a ballet performed by the Turning Pointe School of Dance that tells Eman's life story. It was written and choreographed by Tess Sinke, who had read *Things I Couldn't Say* countless times and felt called to tell Eman's story through dance.

## ACTON News



Lord Acton sculpture



Diet Eman

rescuing shot-down Allied airmen and risking her life in Nazi-occupied territory. They helped rescue thousands of Jews during the Nazi occupation and was arrested and sent to a German concentration camp for four months.

After World War II, Eman studied nursing and worked as a head nurse in Venezuela and as a foreign correspondent and export manager in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She was active in volunteering for the Red Cross Disaster Service and doing relief work in impoverished nations. In her book *Things We Couldn't Say*, she vividly recalls personal accounts and events of her brave saga during the war in the resistance. She currently resides in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII and the liberation of the infamous concentration camp, Auschwitz. It is a good time to reflect on the horrors of the Holocaust, remembering the words of Lord John Acton, "History is not a burden on the memory but an illumination of the soul."

The last Faith and Freedom Award was presented to Lady Margaret Thatcher in 2011. Other past winners include Richard M. DeVos Sr., William F. Buckley Jr., Mart Laar, Charles W. Colson, Rocco Buttiglione, Cardinal Nguyen Van Thuan and John M. Templeton. To learn more about these individuals, visit <http://www.acton.org/about/faith-and-freedom-award>.

# Acton@25 Campaign will wrap up with 25th Annual Dinner

The Acton@25 Capital Campaign is nearly complete, with less than \$300,000 left until the ultimate goal of \$12.5 million is reached. Acton is determined to reach the goal by mid-October ahead of the 25th annual dinner. To help close out the effort, two generous donors have offered to match all donations two-to-one from now until the end of the campaign.

This capital campaign will help Acton complete some exciting and important projects in the community. It will outfit Acton's media center, bolstering the production of podcasts, televised interviews and syndicated radio programming. Your generous support will improve the events in the Mark Murray Auditorium by continuing to bring in the best speakers from around the world and supporting live streaming of these events. These new resources will also allow for the expansion of the Acton internship program, which educates and shapes future business and religious leaders.

As a special thanks, all donors to the campaign will be listed in a special commemorative video documenting the Acton Building's transformation.

Donors who have given \$1,000 or more to the campaign will forever be a part of the building by having their name engraved on a plaque to be installed in Acton's main lobby.

Acton staff and leadership are truly grateful for these resources. "We have been blessed with a beautiful building," says Acton's executive director

Kris Mauren. He adds:

We've been able to display art, produce and screen fascinating documentaries and hear from many truly talented speakers. The success of the capital campaign will improve Acton's commitment to serving the Grand Rapids community as well as lovers of liberty throughout the nation and the world.

Thank you for your continued support and confidence in Acton's mission to promote a free and virtuous society.

"Thank you for your continued support and confidence in Acton's mission to promote a free and virtuous society."

Acton@25 Campaign nears 12.5 million.



## ACTON in the News

"Business, credit, trade, and fiscal responsibility are marks of healthy economies, not the problem, popular as it may be to denounce them. Indeed, these are also marks of economies that effectively care for 'Mother Earth.'"

—Excerpted from Dylan Pahman's article in *Library of Law and Liberty*.

### Rev. Robert Sirico

Title: Pope Francis and His Crusade Against Capitalism  
Program: HuffPost Live  
Air Date: 7.13.15

### Dylan Pahman

Title: Show Me the Way to Poverty  
Publication: Library of Law and Liberty  
Date: 7.14.15

### Samuel Gregg

Title: It's Time for an Encyclical on Christian Persecution  
Publication: Crisis Magazine  
Date: 8.06.15

## 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 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 E-MAIL 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 2015



# ACTON Book Shop

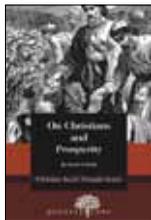


## RETHINK MISSIONS: TOOLKIT

*Produced by PovertyCure*

The PovertyCure ReThink Missions Toolkit is a dynamic and practical set of tools and resources to equip you or your team or organization to have a conversation about how to have the maximum possible impact upon those you want to serve, whether at home or abroad.

**DVD/Guide Sale \$44.99**

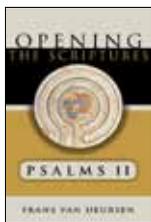


## ON CHRISTIANS AND PROSPERITY

*By Rev. James V. Schall*

In this wide-ranging essay, one of the great teachers of political philosophy of our time calls us to think prudently about poverty and prosperity within the Christian tradition. Fr. Schall engages with core questions about the sources of poverty and prosperity and challenges some of the deeply embedded assumptions.

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## OPENING THE SCRIPTURES: PSALMS II

*By Frans van Deursen*

Opening the Scriptures is neither a new series of technical commentaries, nor is it a collection of sermons. Instead it offers devout church members a series of popularly accessible primers so that the average church-goer can easily grasp them.

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## 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?"

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## ACTON notes

### Calendar of Events

#### ACTON INSTITUTE EVENTS

Date	Event	Location
<b>Oct 15</b>	<b>3rd Annual Pastor Appreciation Breakfast &amp; Lecture</b> Rev. Wayne Schmidt to speak	Grand Rapids, MI
<b>Oct 21</b>	<b>Acton's 25th Anniversary Annual Dinner</b> DeVos Place - Steelcase Ballroom	Grand Rapids, MI
<b>Oct 29</b>	<b>Houston Luncheon</b> Rev. Robert Sirico to speak	Houston, TX
<b>Oct 29</b>	<b>Acton Lecture Series: Children of Monsters</b> Jay Nordlinger to speak	Grand Rapids, MI
<b>Nov 5</b>	<b>Acton Lecture Series: Russell Kirk</b> Bradley Birzer to speak	Grand Rapids, MI
<b>Nov 5</b>	<b>Chicago Open Mic Night</b> University Club of Chicago	Chicago, IL