

Notes

September/October Vol. 29 No. 5



A message from our president

Rev. Robert A. Sirico

Religion, the natural sciences and economics are all, in their own ways, explorations of cause and effect within God's creation. We reap what we sow, physically, morally and socially. Both religion and economics understand the human person as the acting person. In the realm of economics, the focus is on the choices persons make in terms of worldly stewardship, in how they make use of their time, talents and resources. In the realm of religion, the focus is on the free choice of moral goods that fulfill our true nature. Our

deepest religious convictions should guide our stewardship of all worldly goods, and the virtue of prudence, assisted by economic insight, helps us determine the best means by which to incarnate our moral vision.

This is why the Acton Institute sees the intersection of religion and economics as so vital to a free and virtuous society. From the most recent book by our director of research, Samuel Gregg, to our upcoming programing, including our Annual Dinner and additional conferences, we seek to explore these themes in both our research and programing. You will also hear about a recent interview with me in the Wall Street Journal on the ten-

sions and opportunities for people of faith in the free market.

We could not engage the public, academics, and church and business leaders on these vital themes so close to the center of the human person without our generous donors, who make it all possible. Thank you for your continued generous support of the Acton Institute. If you are just learning about Acton, we invite you to find additional resources on our website, including our weekly podcast *Acton Line*. Please also prayerfully consider supporting us in our mission to articulate a moral vision grounded in sound economics so essential to the flourishing of both individuals and communities. ■

Acton Events

[REGISTER AT ACTON.ORG/EVENTS](https://acton.org/events)

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
OCT 15	Acton Institute's 29th Annual Dinner Featuring Andrew Klavan	Grand Rapids, MI
OCT 16	Business Matters 2019 Featuring leading experts and accomplished business leaders	Grand Rapids, MI
NOV 14	Acton Lecture Series "We're All Dead": The Moral Legacy of Keynes	Grand Rapids, MI
NOV 21	Toward a Free and Virtuous Society The Fall of the Berlin Wall and Marxism in the Modern Era	Boston, MA
DEC 05	Acton Lecture Series The Rule of Law vs. the Rule of Judges	Grand Rapids, MI

Reason, Faith and the Struggle for Western Civilization

Caroline Roberts

The genius of Western civilization is its unique synthesis of reason and faith. But today that synthesis is under attack—from the East by radical Islam (faith without reason) and from within the West itself by aggressive secularism (reason without faith). The stakes are incalculably high.

In his new book, *Reason, Faith and the Struggle for Western Civilization*, Acton's director of research, Samuel Gregg, proves how central the integration of reason and faith is to the heritage and survival of Western civilization.

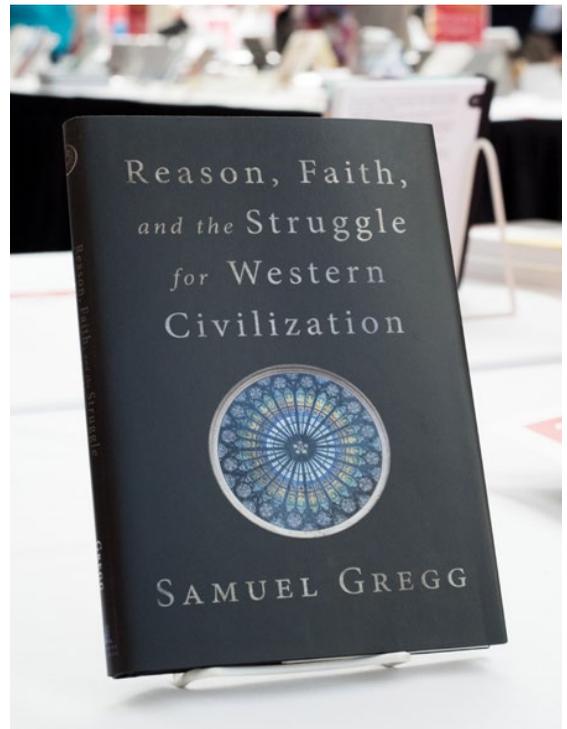
The naïve and increasingly common assumption that reason and faith are incompatible is simply at odds with the facts of history. The revelation in the Hebrew Scriptures of a reasonable Creator imbued Judaism and Christianity with a conviction that the world is intelligible, leading to the flowering of reason and the invention of science in the West. It was no accident that the Enlightenment took place in the culture formed by the Jewish and Christian faiths.

We can all see that faith without reason is benighted at best, fanatical and violent at worst. But too many forget that reason, stripped of faith, is subject to its own pathologies. A supposedly autonomous reason easily sinks into fanaticism, stifling dissent as bigoted and irrational and devouring the humane civilization fostered by the integration of reason and faith. The blood-soaked history of the 20th century

attests to the totalitarian forces unleashed by corrupted reason.

But Gregg does more than lament the intellectual and spiritual ruin caused by the divorce of reason and faith. He shows that each of these foundational principles corrects the other's excesses and enhances our comprehension of the truth in a continuous renewal of civilization. By recovering this balance, we can avoid a suicidal winner-take-all conflict between reason and faith and a future that will respect neither.

You can purchase your copy of *Reason, Faith and the Struggle for Western Civilization* in Acton's book shop at shop.acton.org. N



Rev. Robert Sirico speaks to Bill McGurn on capitalism

Rev. Ben Johnson

The Acton Institute recently reached an international audience of influencers with its mission of uniting markets with morality. The Wall Street Journal published a profile of Acton and an extended look at the ministry of Acton co-founder Fr. Robert Sirico in its “Weekend Interview” feature on Saturday, August 3.

“When the Market Meets Morality” by William McGurn introduced a critical group of thought leaders to Acton’s work of promoting a free and virtuous society. McGurn writes that, like Lord Acton, “Father Sirico and his merry band argue that political liberty and economic liberty are the guarantors of religious liberty.” Yet the WSJ article goes deeper, presenting Acton’s approach as the antidote to “woke” capitalism – the marriage of corporate behavior with the culture of outrage.

Fr. Sirico tells McGurn that Acton’s purpose is not merely to endorse the efficacy of markets or freedom but “to ask: What’s freedom for? And to answer that question, you have to understand what man is for.” Economic liberty is a necessary but not a sufficient means of establishing the good society. Acton believes that liberty, McGurn writes, requires “a ‘telos,’ a sense of higher purpose – of how human beings should use



their freedom. That depends on the realization that not all choices are morally equal.”

The market produces the goods and services that society craves in abundance. That is its genius – and its dilemma. Its creative forces reflect the values of the underlying culture. As society frays, corporations become increasingly brittle and censorious. Social conservatives who blame these failings on capitalism, or “liberalism,” cite the dominance of companies like Google or Twitter. But McGurn notes that institutions that once “looked monolithic and invincible – the Big Three television networks, IBM, local taxi monopolies,” fell as innovative competitors grabbed their market share just as unexpectedly as protesters felled the Berlin Wall.

“Market innovations before they are made always seem impractical,” Fr. Sirico says. Woke capitalism “will ultimately immolate itself,” Fr. Sirico forecasts, because its intolerance chafes the freedom that lies at the core of our human nature. But then comes the hard work of rebuilding from the foundations, a process that relies on the work of institutions that understand the deepest dimensions of the human person.

“It’s a tall order,” he says, “but we are culture builders. And one of the tools in the toolbox is capitalism – to form our people to compete well in the market, and to execute, to have confidence in what they are doing.”

McGurn concludes by encapsulating Acton’s message:

“The answer isn’t to head to the hills,” Father Sirico says. “The answer is a simultaneous liberality in our economy and vigor in our moral stances.”

The message is clear: The Acton Institute embodies the lessons society has learned over the last half-century. Culture, not command, will transform the public square. **N**



Acton Line is the official podcast of the Acton Institute

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ACTON INSTITUTE

ACTON LECTURE SERIES

<p>November 14 “We’re All Dead”: The Moral Legacy of Keynes</p>	<p>December 5 The Rule of Law vs. the Rule of Judges</p>
 <p>Victor Claar, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Economics, Florida Gulf Coast University</p>	 <p>Matthew J. Franck Associate Director, Princeton University</p>

LEARN MORE AND REGISTER AT:
acton.org/lecture-series

Can’t join us in person? Watch it livestreamed at: acton.org/live

BRIEF

Andrew Klavan to keynote Annual Dinner

Mark your calendars for the Acton Institute's 2019 Annual Dinner to be held on Tuesday, October 15, at the JW Marriott in beautiful downtown Grand Rapids, Michigan. The dinner celebrates our 29th year of working to promote a free and virtuous society.

It is our pleasure to announce that this year's special guest and speaker is Andrew Klavan. Klavan is the author of such internationally bestselling crime novels as *True Crime*, filmed by Clint Eastwood; *Don't Say a Word*, filmed and starring Michael Douglas; and *Empire of Lies*. Stephen King called him "the most original novelist of crime and suspense since Cornell Woolrich." He has been nominated for the Mystery Writers of America's Edgar Award five times and has won twice.

Andrew is a contributing editor to *City Journal*, the magazine of the Manhattan Institute, and has written numerous articles for them, including a report from an embed with American troops in Afghanistan and a consideration of the politics of William Wordsworth. His essays and op-eds on politics, religion, movies and literature have appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *LA Times* and elsewhere. He currently does a Monday through Thursday podcast, *The Andrew Klavan Show*, for the *Daily Wire*.

To save your seat, please register at acton.org/events. **N**

BRIEF

Remembering Diet Eman

On September 3, Diet Eman, a Dutch resistance worker during World War II, passed away at the age of 99.

Diet spent several years dedicated to the dangerous work of hiding Jews and resisting the Nazi occupation of her home country, and she did so at great personal cost. Of the sixteen original members of her resistance group, eight died in prison, by execution or in concentration camps. Diet herself was imprisoned in the Vught concentration camp for a number of months in 1944, managed to convince the Germans to release her, and then immediately went back to resistance work.

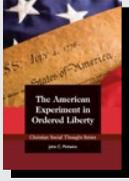
In 2015, Diet Eman became the ninth recipient of the Faith and Freedom Award from the Acton Institute, which was presented to her at our 25th anniversary Annual Dinner that fall. Upon receiving the award, she had this to say:

I want to say, you think it's something special. But when your country is taken ... you would have done the same there, when you had friends who were Jewish and they were in danger. So, I don't think it's anything special. But I appreciate it very, very much.

When dark times came and her conscience compelled her to take a stand, Eman used the gifts God had given her – her strength, her intelligence, her very life – and put them to work, sacrificially defending those who could not defend themselves.

Learn more about Acton's Faith and Freedom Award and watch Eman's full acceptance speech at acton.org. **N**

Acton Book Store - Top Sellers



The American Experiment in Ordered Liberty

Sale \$8.00

By John Pinheiro

The question of whether Catholicism is compatible with the American project in liberal democracy remains contentious. In this volume, Professor John Pinheiro brings historical expertise to the topic, assessing the merits of the American project by focusing on the founding period. **Softcover, 102 pages**

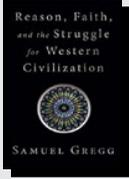


On the Duty to Keep Faith with Heretics

Sale \$29.95

By Martinus Becanus

This work offers an extraordinary perspective on the early modern debates about toleration and the binding force of agreements between people of different Christian faiths. The Jesuit controversialist Martinus Becanus argues in favor of the duty to honor promises beyond confessional boundaries. **Hardcover, 180 pages**



Reason, Faith and the Struggle for Western Civilization

Sale \$20.99

By Samuel Gregg

The genius of Western civilization is its unique synthesis of reason and faith. But today that synthesis is under attack—from the East by radical Islam (faith without reason) and from within the West itself by aggressive secularism (reason without faith). The stakes are incalculably high. **Hardcover, 256 pages**



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Reason, Faith and the Struggle for Western Civilization	\$20.99	_____	_____

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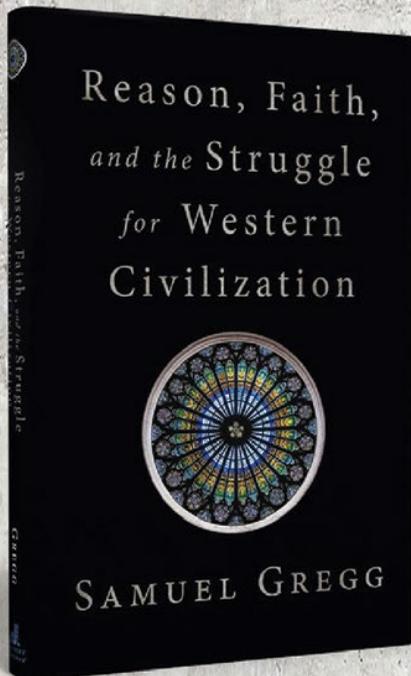
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