

ACTON notes

Acton Institute Newsletter

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“connecting good intentions with sound economics”

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President's Message

The Acton Institute has been, since its founding, grounded in certain core principles. Chief among them is that of the dignity of the human person. This person, created in the image of God, is unique, rational and responsible. When this person freely employs their gifts according to a rightly formed conscience in service to their responsibilities to God and neighbor, they truly become who they are, who they were made by God to be. That understanding is at the core of our mission to build a free and virtuous society.

In this issue of Acton Notes, you will read about some of our recent events, programs and initiatives. At the end of January, I had the pleasure of speaking with my friend of many years Ricardo Ball live from the streets of Caracas about the ongoing crisis in Venezuela. Our conversation on the tragic case of Venezuela, one in the seemingly endless series of failures of socialism, was livestreamed to audiences around the world.

Here in Grand Rapids, Acton will be co-sponsoring a Liberty and Markets conference with Liberty Fund titled Evaluating the Idea of Social Justice. At the Acton Building we have been hosting our ongoing Acton Lecture Series and across the country our Toward a Free and Virtuous Society Conferences, which bring the Acton Institute's unique vision of the free society to a broad range of religious and community leaders.

Humorist and best-selling author P.J. O'Rourke gave us an evening filled with his characteristic wit and humor during an Acton-hosted dinner in Chicago. If you were not able to attend the March 7 event, please listen to P.J.'s recent interview with Acton Senior Research Fellow Jordan Ballor on the Acton Line podcast.

I would like to close by thanking all our readers. Your attention is a gift and we hope that through our work we are able to help equip you to bring about a freer society grounded in the spirit of truth. Thank you especially to those whose financial gifts make this work possible. And to those of you who have not donated to Acton before, please prayerfully consider doing so.



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

ACTONINSTITUTE

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

“This person, created in the image of God, is unique, rational and responsible.”

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

P.J. O'Rourke speaks at Chicago dinner

On March 7, the Acton Institute hosted an evening in Chicago featuring author and political satirist P.J. O'Rourke. A crowd of supporters and friends as well as Acton staff enjoyed an evening of dining and fellowship at The Peninsula Chicago.

With more than one million words of trenchant journalism under his byline and more citations in *The Penguin Dictionary of Humorous Quotations* than any living writer, O'Rourke has established himself as America's premier political satirist. Both *TIME* and the *Wall Street Journal* have labeled O'Rourke "the funniest writer in America." Covering current events, O'Rourke combines the skill and discipline of an investigative reporter with a comedian's sense of the absurd and the stupid. O'Rourke's best-selling books include his newest release, *None of My Business*, which was available at the dinner for purchase and signing by O'Rourke.

Known as a hard-bitten, cigar-smoking conservative, O'Rourke bashes all political persuasions.

"P. J. O'Rourke has established himself as America's premier political satirist."

"Giving money and power to government," says O'Rourke, "is like giving whiskey and car keys to teenage boys."

The evening began with an introduction from Rev. Robert Sirico, who reminded the attendees that the United States is at a crucial point in history as significant numbers of people are increasingly buying into collectivist ideology. "The work of modern forms of central planning need to be confronted with logic, facts and winsomeness," said Sirico. "And O'Rourke brings an insight to these issues that is elevating and humorous."

O'Rourke gave a humorous talk touching on economics, culture and history. He also took the time to address audience questions after his talk, covering everything from progressivism in colleges to the future of conservatism.

To register for upcoming Acton Institute events, go to acton.org/events to view a full calendar.



Supporters and friends enjoyed an evening of dining and fellowship.



O'Rourke gave a talk touching on economics, culture and history.

From Our Conference Participants

Acton Institute is truly outstanding for resources, information and interaction. Everything gained from Acton has been effectively used in my business, economics and communications classes.

– Michael Mandel
Bridgeport, Connecticut

Acton University really helped connect the dots for me and introduced me to new areas of study and research.

– Scott Hall
Hannibal, Missouri

Venezuela’s “man-made failure”: A view from the U.S.

On January 28, Rev. Sirico interviewed Ricardo Ball, a financial adviser and entrepreneur in Venezuela, who gave an in-depth examination of the failure of socialism – live from the streets of Caracas. They discussed empty shelves, swelling streets teeming with oppressed Venezuelans yearning to break free and the role of the military in cementing Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro’s despotic rule.

Ball explained how the resistance movement led by the National Assembly President Juan Guaidó does not represent a coup but the actions of a constitutionally elected officer reversing a fraudulent election.

“I think the important point that has been made here is to connect this experiment over 16 years with real socialism,” Rev. Sirico said as he concluded Monday’s livestream broadcast. “This is socialism. This is not an aberration of socialism. It’s its logic being fulfilled.”

enacted *real* socialism. Among other things, Venezuela’s “state capitalist government” did not go far enough in imposing capital controls.

It is precisely to avoid this question that socialists continually recast previous utopias as inevitable disappointments. These truths cannot be repeated too loudly or too often.

Ball had a crisp answer when Rev. Sirico asked, “What can we do to help?”

“Just retransmit the truth,” he said.

Rev. Robert A. Sirico to speak at Detroit luncheon

You are invited to join Rev. Robert A. Sirico, co-founder and president of the Acton Institute, and other supporters and friends of Acton on Wednesday, May 1, at the Detroit Athletic Club for a luncheon and a special keynote address titled “Moral and Practical Problems with the Resurgent Socialism” by Rev. Sirico.

Visit acton.org/events to save your spot at this

ACTON News



As Venezuela collapses, so do the dreams of countless Western socialists.



Hugo Chavez received global adulation when he began to refer to his economic policies as socialist. UK Labor Party leader Jeremy Corbyn, who could be the next prime minister of our closest ally, insisted that Chavez “showed us that there is a different, and a better, way of doing things. It’s called socialism.”

As with previous socialist idols such as Cuba, some apologists blame U.S. sanctions against the nation. Yet the economy had already contracted one-third by the time the sanctions were imposed.

Now, Noam Chomsky insists Venezuela never

popular event or become an official sponsor of our Detroit luncheon.

Sponsoring a table is a great way to secure your own seat at the luncheon and introduce your friends and colleagues to Acton’s mission as well. Table sponsorship benefits include: reserved VIP seating for eight, a special gift for you and your guests, and a recognition in our printed program at the event and on Acton’s website.

For more information or to reserve your table, email Julie Schnepf at jschnepf@acton.org or call 616.454.3080.

2019 Acton University plenary speakers announced

Acton University 2019, which will take place June 18-21 in Grand Rapids, Michigan, features a powerful lineup of evening speakers. Mari-Ann Kalam, former member of the Estonian Parliament, Jonah Goldberg, senior editor at National Review, and Deltan Martinazzo Dallagnol, Attorney of the Federal Public Ministry of Brazil, will join Rev. Sirico in addressing attendees from all over the world. Last year, over 1,000 leaders, educators and students, representing over 80 countries from many faith traditions, attended Acton University.

Mari-Ann Kalam was raised in the United States by Estonian parents who survived World War II only to find their homeland occupied by the Soviet Union. She grew up with an acute appreciation for the Estonian language, culture and people and served as vice president of the Estonian American National Council during the last years of the Soviet Empire. In this role, she lobbied Congress and U.S. presidents on behalf of the Baltic nations and Estonian prisoners of conscience held in the USSR. She is still active in

Estonian and European politics today.

Jonah Goldberg holds the Asness Chair in Applied Liberty at the American Enterprise Institute and is a senior editor at National Review and a fellow at the National Review Institute. A best-selling author, he has a nationally syndicated column that appears regularly in over 100 newspapers across the U.S. He is also the founding editor of National Review Online.

A Harvard-trained attorney, Deltan Martinazzo Dallagnol gained international attention as the lead prosecutor in Operation Car Wash, one of the largest corruption probes in Latin American history. The Car Wash investigation implicated four former presidents and dozens of congressmen and high-profile businessmen in Brazil. Dallagnol's team was responsible for reaching agreements to recover more than three billion dollars.

Acton University 2019 will feature over 110 courses and over 70 teaching experts in their fields. To apply to and find out more about Acton University, go to university.acton.org.



2019 Acton University plenary speakers: Mari-Ann Kalam, Jonah Goldberg, Deltan Dallagnol and Rev. Robert A. Sirico

ACTON in the News

“Good government begins with the people, and that means each one of us has a responsibility to be good stewards of our pocketbooks as well as of our votes.”

—Excerpted from Jordan J. Ballor’s article
“What America’s Public Debt Crisis Says about
Us and What We Can Do about It”

Alejandro Chafuen

Title: An Inspiration Against Socialism
Publication: Forbes
Date: 02.11.19

Samuel Gregg

Title: The Crumbling Anti-Politics of
Constitutional Patriotism
Publication: Law & Liberty
Date: 02.04.19

Jordan J. Ballor

Title: What America’s Public Debt Crisis Says
about Us and What We Can Do about It
Program: Public Discourse
Date: 02.03.19

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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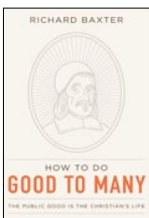


Work: Theological Foundations and Practical Implications

Edited by R. Keith Loftin and Trey Dimsdale

With contributions from a variety of leading theologians, this book brings together biblical scholars, ethicists, economists representing a spectrum of theological voices. It will bring a new academic depth to the literature on the theology of work and provide a comprehensive resource for scholars and students alike.

Softcover 290 pages Sale \$35.00

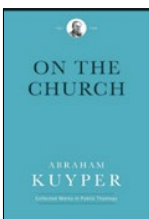


How to Do Good to Many: The Public Good Is the Christian's Life

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. Baxter always engaged in dispute and polemic in pursuit of unity, love, and truth.

Softcover 107 pages Sale \$9.95

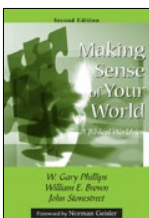


On the Church

By Abraham Kuyper

On the Church contains seven of Kuyper's most important essays and speeches on the nature of the church. These newly translated works show Kuyper's conviction that Christians must take an active role in the world, a world upheld by God's common grace but standing in need of God's particular grace in Christ.

Hardcover 495 pages Sale \$49.99



Making Sense of Your World: A Biblical Worldview

By W. Gary Phillips, William E. Brown and John Stonestreet

Making Sense of Your World offers a basic, accessible introduction to biblical worldview that covers all of these aspects of worldview thinking. Part One compares the basic worldviews, Part Two contrasts the biblical worldview with the others, and Part Three constructs a biblical worldview in four key areas.

Softcover 308 pages Sale \$19.00

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On the Church	\$49.99		
Making Sense of Your World: A Biblical Worldview	\$19.00		

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Calendar of Events

ACTON INSTITUTE EVENTS

Date	Event	Location
Apr 25	Acton Institute Lecture Series Islam and Freedom: The Challenge and the Hope	Grand Rapids, MI
May 30	Acton Institute Lecture Series Venerable Fulton J. Sheen: Anti-Communism and Catholic Patriotism	Grand Rapids, MI
Jun 18	Acton University A Four-Day Exploration of the Intellectual Foundations of a Free Society	Grand Rapids, MI
Jul 18	Acton Institute Lecture Series Child, Family, & State: Religious Liberty in a Secular Age	Grand Rapids, MI