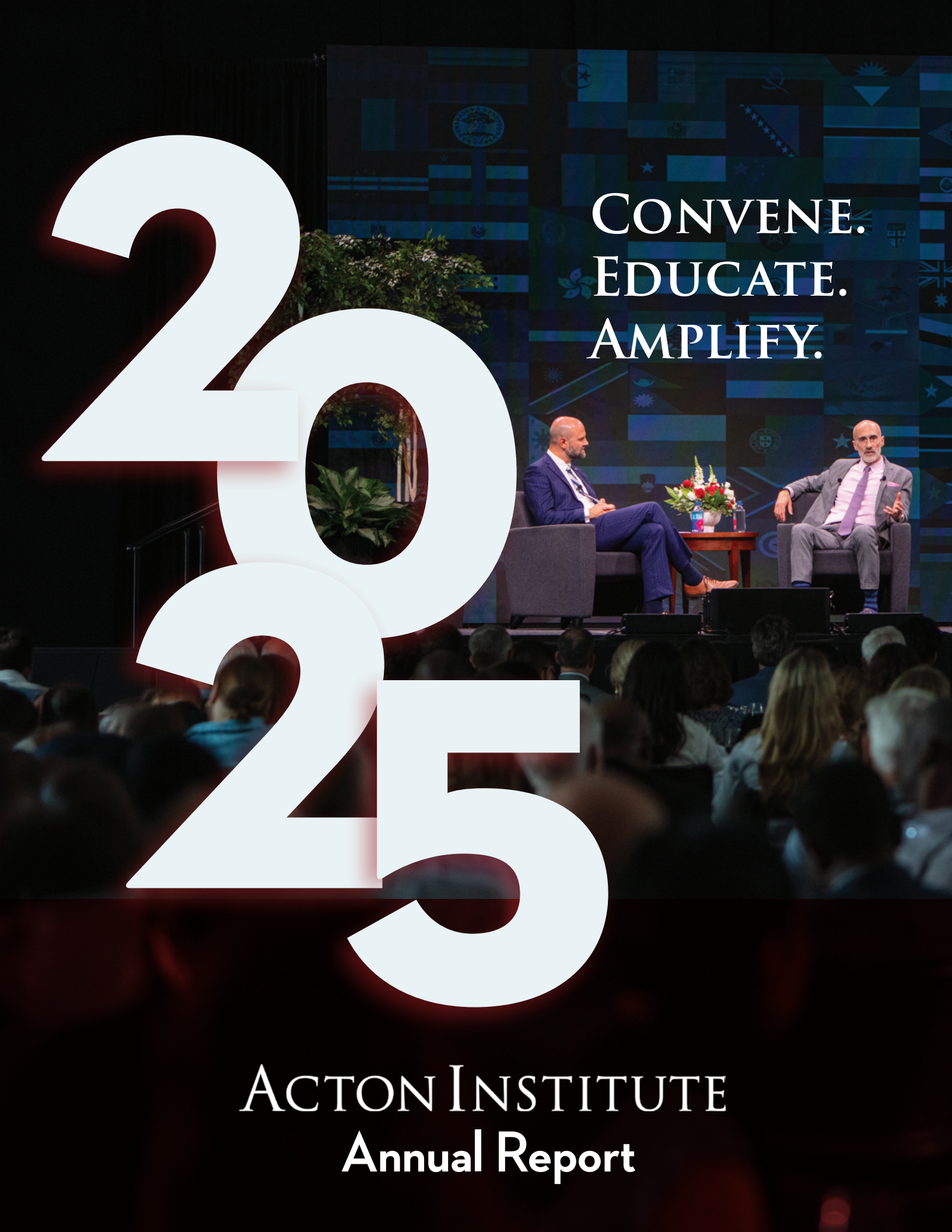




2025

CONVENE.
EDUCATE.
AMPLIFY.

ACTON INSTITUTE
Annual Report



DEAR FRIENDS,

We often describe our work at Acton as “connecting good intentions with sound economics.” Thirty-six years ago, the Acton Institute was founded to push back against a movement that twisted Christian teaching to fit Marxist ideas, and against a growing belief in the West that government, not individuals, should run the economy. Acton’s fight for a free and virtuous society matters now more than ever and as I reflect on 2025, I am proud of the ways Acton continues to meet that need both at home and abroad.

Our work is centered on three priorities: to convene, to educate, and to amplify. In its 20th year, Acton University brought together approximately 1,000 participants from over 75 countries to examine the principles of a free and virtuous society and consider how those ideas might shape their work and communities.

Yesu Karunanidhi, an attendee from India, perfectly encapsulated the impact that programming like AU seeks to promote: “I had a very limited understanding of freedom, virtues, human flourishing, and entrepreneurship. I was infatuated with Marxism and socialism. I was prejudiced about liberalism and free market economy. I have learned at Acton University the intrinsic value of the human person. I am liberated from my infatuation with Marxism.”

We also expanded our international efforts by hosting the first Acton Experience Brazil in Belo Horizonte. At a time when Brazilians are facing serious threats to their freedom, responsibility, and the moral foundations of a flourishing society, the conference brought Acton’s ideas to a growing network of leaders and created new opportunities for deeper formation and engagement.

The election of Pope Leo XIV as the first American pope also presents a significant opportunity for Acton to expand its voice and influence at the heart of the Catholic Church. With Scot Landry joining our Istituto Acton team, we have expanded our voice and ability to contribute to these important conversations in Rome and beyond. I am grateful for all that was accomplished in 2025 and for the many friends and partners who made it possible. Because of your support, Acton’s ability to convene, educate, and amplify continues to grow, and leaders around the world are being equipped to build freer, more virtuous, and more flourishing societies.

Very truly yours,

KRIS ALAN MAUREN

President & Co-Founder,
Acton Institute

ACTON TODAY

The Acton Institute was founded to promote a free and virtuous society characterized by individual liberty and sustained by religious principles. From that foundation, Acton speaks into every major strand of today’s debate about the future of a free society.

Faith leaders gain economic tools for ministry, grounded in the truth that liberty and morality are inseparable.

Business leaders and entrepreneurs expand their moral grounding to lead with integrity, treating enterprise itself as a form of service.

Community leaders are equipped to strengthen the institutions that hold society together, because lasting change starts locally, not with distant policy.

After 36 years, the Acton Institute continues to convene leaders across every tradition around the values that hold a free society together. This annual report captures just a glimpse of that work and those who are carrying it forward.

2025

BY THE NUMBERS

The Acton Institute had a momentous year in 2025 for its ongoing work of building a free and virtuous society. Acton's annual conference, Acton University (AU), drew almost a thousand attendees, with clergy, entrepreneurs, educators, and faithful co-laborers from across the globe gathering in Grand Rapids, MI. In 2025, Acton also

brought the signature Acton experience to Belo Horizonte, Brazil for the first time.

In addition, Acton continued to host events such as our Acton Lecture Series, which drew more than 1,500 attendees and promoted Acton ideals in relation to some of the most pressing issues of our time.

ACTON UNIVERSITY

79

COUNTRIES
REPRESENTED

998

ATTENDEES

200

ACTON EXPERIENCE
BRAZIL INAUGURAL
ATTENDEES

ANNUAL
DINNER
ATTENDEES

623

LEADERS
CONVENED
IN ROME

1,100

LECTURE
ATTENDEES

1.5K

ACTON EXPERTISE

25+
AREAS OF EXPERTISE

AMERICAN FOUNDING

CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

ECONOMICS

PROTESTANT THEOLOGY

PHILOSOPHY

ORTHODOX THEOLOGY

POLITICAL SCIENCE

AND MORE!

AMPLIFYING ACTON'S MESSAGE

Outside of event programming, Acton's influence in publishing and through digital channels continued to grow as well. With more than four million content views across various social media platforms, Acton has become a major source for serious insights on the intersections of freedom and virtue, touching on everything from breaking news to broader current trends in politics and culture.

1.7M+

TOTAL WEB VIEWS

108K+

PODCAST
DOWNLOADS

10.8K+

RELIGION & LIBERTY
READERS

SOCIAL REACH

4M+

SOCIAL MEDIA
VIEWS

120K+

SOCIAL
ENGAGEMENTS

8.5K+

NEW
FOLLOWERS



ACTON INSTITUTE



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ACTON INSTITUTE



ACTON UNIVERSITY

Acton University 2025 brought together participants from around the world to meet, discuss, and reflect on the ideas connected with a free and virtuous society. With over 2,000 applicants, Acton University is the premiere event showcasing the potential of a society where good intentions meet sound economics. Bringing together new thinkers and pioneers, AU 2025 saw 65% of its total attendees join for the first time, going on to join Acton’s growing alumni network.

Attendees heard from a tremendous lineup of evening plenary speakers, including Matt Hangen

of Water4, Heather Templeton Dill of the Templeton Foundation, business leader Frank Hanna, and public intellectual and professor Arthur C. Brooks.

Acton University is the Acton Institute in action: convening the brightest minds and best innovators from across university, clergy, and countless industries to create a truly diverse, intellectually curious, morally grounded coalition not only interested in taking on the future’s challenges, but capable of doing so via a solid intellectual and moral grounding.

CONVENE

“It’s been a great experience that helped me connect my faith with my cultural, political, and social values. Truth is truth, not an ideology, and the Acton Institute stands with it.”

- Alessio C., Italy

“What a gift it was to meet other entrepreneurs who are in similar stages of life-or even further along-who offered advice not just as peers, but as friends, united in a shared desire to flourish together. Purpose was present in every conversation, and I saw God at work in surprising ways through each person I met.”

- Mark H., U.S.

Acton University 2025 is one of the few conferences on faith and economics that is truly multigenerational and multicultural. Attendees included business and nonprofit leaders, religious leaders from a wide variety of backgrounds, and 215 students (including 25 as part of Acton’s first-ever high school cohort), all engaged in the common cause of bettering society.

2,231
APPLICANTS

649
NEW
PARTICIPANTS

215
STUDENTS





ACTON EXPERIENCE BRAZIL

In 2025, the Acton Institute continued to build on its international work to create coalitions around the timeless principles of truth, virtue, and ordered liberty. For the first time ever, the Institute brought the Acton University experience global. More than 200 attendees met in Belo Horizonte, Brazil for programming that included top

Acton voices alongside notable Brazilian intellectuals. In partnership with many local sponsors, Acton Experience Brazil was the latest in a lineup of conferences designed to make the freedom and virtue movement even more of a worldwide endeavor, supporting and highlighting many friends of liberty in Brazil.

“As an intern at the Acton Institute as part of the Acton Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) in 2023, I had the opportunity to witness the early vision of Acton Experience Brazil. That made attending its first edition in 2025 especially meaningful.

For the first time, Brazil hosted the first official Acton Institute event, featuring Acton speakers alongside leading Brazilian thinkers. The result was something truly unique: a high-level forum that brought together free-market economics and moral values.

To me, that is what makes Acton Experience Brazil stand out. Brazil has excellent conferences on economics and excellent conferences on moral values, but none bring the two together. Given the quality of its first edition and the unique space it fills, I believe Acton Experience Brazil has every opportunity to grow and become one of Brazil’s leading conferences.”

- Silvio Ramos, AEB2025 attendee



A HIGH-LEVEL FORUM
THAT BROUGHT TOGETHER
FREE-MARKET ECONOMICS
AND MORAL VALUES

MANY THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS LOCAL SPONSORS FOR AEB2025:

Endurance Capital Partners
Marcelo Tostes Advogados
Falcon Hotéis
Brasil Paralelo
Mackenzie Center for Economic Freedom
Instituto Liberal
Mises Brasil
Instituto Brasileiro de Direito e Religião

ACTON IN ROME: A HISTORIC YEAR

Throughout its history, the Acton Institute has come alongside and supported faith and freedom leaders wherever they may be, including in centers such as Rome. In a pivotal year for the Church, because of the death of Pope Francis and the election of Pope Leo XIV, the first US-born Pope in history, Acton played a remarkable role in educational programs and facilitated conversations designed to serve Church officials in Rome and around the globe – staying faithful to the cause of the education of religious leaders that spurred the Acton Institute’s creation in 1990.



350
ATTENDEES

15
EMBASSIES
REPRESENTED

SUPPORTING FAITH LEADERS

In 2025, Acton programming brought cardinals, archbishops, and bishops, from across the world together to explore practical applications of proper human anthropology to markets, international trade, poverty, housing, entrepreneurship, and much more. For example, Acton’s annual International Bishops Forum augments bishops’ deep theological knowledge by exploring economic incentives and consequences of social policies, so that these leaders can best respond to the vital issues facing their dioceses.

“The courses, reflections, and guidance have been deeply meaningful to me, particularly because they address the realities and challenges that we face in our societies and in our ministry as bishops. I can honestly say that I have benefited greatly from the wisdom, experience, and recommendations shared by the experts at the Acton Institute. What I have learned has been very useful in my life and ministry as a bishop, especially in helping me reflect more deeply on how we can serve our people with greater responsibility, wisdom, and vision.”

– Bishop from Africa

FAITH AND ENTERPRISE: CALCULATED OR MITIGATED RISK?

In February, Acton hosted a discussion on the nuances of faith applied to entrepreneurship and its vastly unpredictable outcomes. Given that business risk is natural to Judeo-Christian culture, the gathering fostered discussion around how faith mitigates risk aversion and how hope and trust in God should be the guiding post.

THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH IN AN AGE OF UNCERTAINTY

In October 2025, Acton hosted a high-profile convening focused on “The Social Doctrine of the Church in an Age of Uncertainty.” This Italian-language event brought together the Italian Finance Minister, several Cardinals, various senior diplomats, and many other Church, academic and business leaders at San Salvatore in Lauro Church.

THE VOCATION OF THE ENTREPRENEUR

In May, Acton hosted its conference on ‘The Vocation of the Entrepreneur’ to continue the application of Acton’s principles to the ideas of work, anthropology, and human flourishing.

This event, organized with GCID Giovani Nazionale, with the support of the Dicastery for Evangelization, brought together entrepreneurs, civil leaders, Church representatives, and business professionals from Italy and the United States during the Jubilee of Entrepreneurs.

The distinguished speakers explored the idea of business as a vocation, one that contributes to human dignity through innovation and responsible economic activity, inspired by the Church’s social teaching.

AI, HUMAN DIGNITY, & THE FREE SOCIETY

In December 2025, Acton collaborated with Liberty Fund, Templeton Religion Trust, and John Templeton Foundation to bring together high-profile AI experts and ethicists to discuss the pressing issues facing humanity now that AI both assists human work and presents new logistical and ethical questions. The discussions anticipated Pope Leo’s landmark encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas*.

ACTON PILGRIMAGE TO ROME

Also in December, Acton restarted its annual private pilgrimage to Rome. These in-depth study tours offer a rare opportunity to encounter the Eternal City not simply as a visitor, but through the distinctive hospitality, friendships, and access that Acton’s Rome team is uniquely able to provide. For the group who joined the tour, the week was both spiritually enriching and deeply memorable.

2025 INTERNATIONAL BISHOPS FORUM

101
ATTENDEES

73.4M+
CATHOLICS
REPRESENTED

39
COUNTRIES
REPRESENTED





ACTON LECTURE SERIES

Along with building influence in Rome and bringing the Acton Institute's impact to attendees across the globe, 2025 also saw a continued focus on intellectual enrichment in Acton's own hometown of Grand Rapids, Michigan. During the year, Acton hosted a series of lectures at its headquarters, featuring historians, academics, and other public intellectuals to spark local interest in what the Institute has to offer.

All Acton Lecture Series are recorded and available for download around the world.

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMUNITY

"Acton is a gem that we can brag about having here in our own backyard."

"Love the format and love that Acton offers this learning opportunity every few months. I often use these lectures as a way to introduce friends and colleagues to the Acton Institute, and this has been successful."

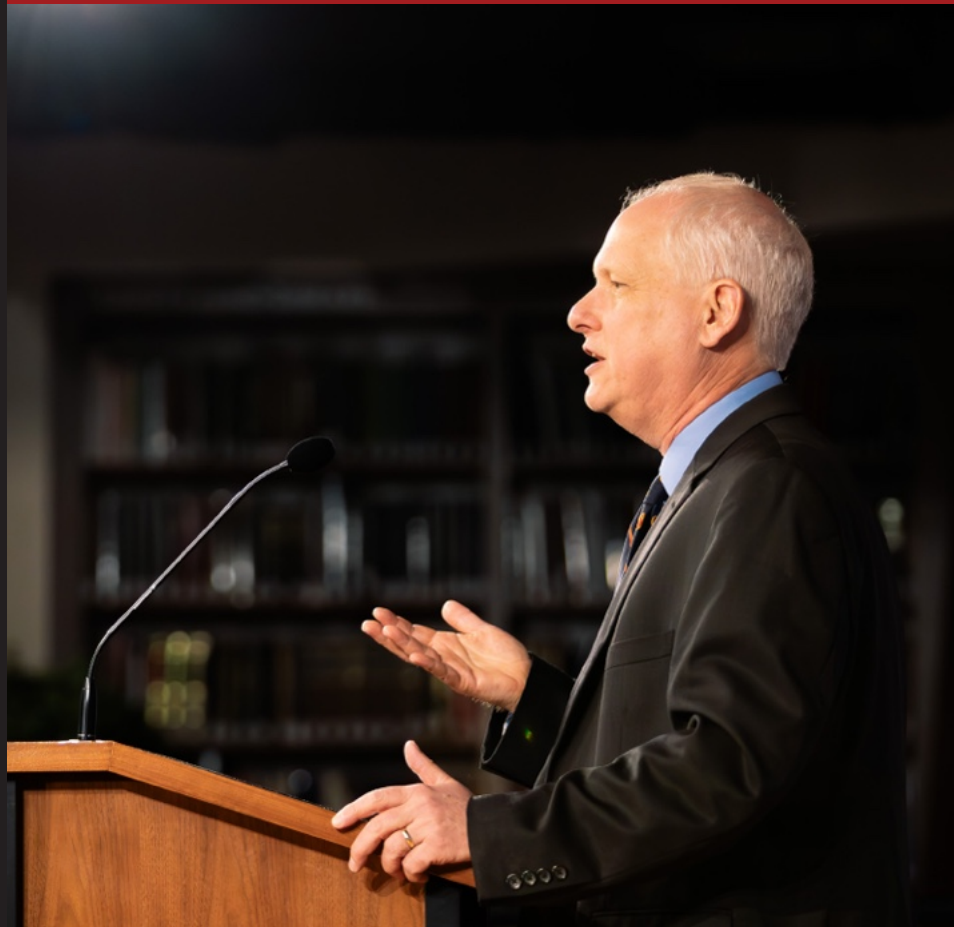
LECTURES INCLUDED:

Becoming a Nation of Righteousness: Rev. John Rankin's Calling and Triumph over Slavery
Caleb Franz, Historian and Author

Tariffs, Trade Wars, and the State of the Economy
James Hartley, Professor of Economics, Mount Holyoke College

The Heart of a Machine: Technological Threats to Liberty in Adam Smith & Beyond
Philip Bunn, Professor of Political Science, Covenant College

Virtues, Not Values: Reclaiming the Human Core of Business
Andrew Abela, Author and Dean, CUA Busch School of Business



In October, Acton hosted its annual dinner, celebrating the Institute's 35th year in existence and the tremendous work that has been done by its many staff, friends, co-laborers, and supporters in defense of a free and virtuous society. Attendees gathered at the JW Marriott in Grand Rapids for a night that included an alumni reflection from Acton scholar Dr. Clara Piano and a keynote address from New York Times columnist and author of "Believe: Why Everyone Should be Religious," Ross Douthat.



ANNUAL DINNER



In addition, the Institute honored Nobel prize-winning economist Dr. Vernon L. Smith with its Faith and Freedom Award. Dr. Smith's groundbreaking work proved that real people, operating within free markets, can coordinate and thrive without the need for central planning. His research transformed economics and highlighted how voluntary exchange, rooted in moral principles, can lead to just and efficient outcomes. In honor of Vernon's groundbreaking work, the Acton Institute created the Vernon and Candace Smith Leadership Fund in 2025 to support efforts that expose emerging leaders across cultural backgrounds to these key economic truths to become powerful voices for freedom and human flourishing.





EDUCATE

NEW BOOKS IN 2025

While Acton’s online reach has grown tremendously in recent years, the Institute continued to distribute original scholarship at the intersection of faith and free market economics. Acton books, and those published by Acton’s scholars, generate a tremendous amount of content, spreading the ideas and values at the heart of Acton’s mission through the books themselves and references in newsletters, social media, news media commentary, etc.

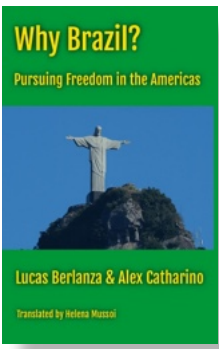


On the Duties of Merchants (Sources in Early Modern Economics, Ethics, and Law) (Paperback)

By Daniel Souterius, Edited by Joost Hengstmengel and Henri Krop, Translated by Albert Gootjes

Translated here for the first time, this work is a moral defense of commerce from the early days of the Dutch Republic (1615).

“In the end, Souterius offers no grand policy prescriptions—only the humble conviction that a just and humane economy begins not in legislation or technological advancement but in the conscience and actions of the merchant.” – Michael J. Lynch, Teaching Fellow, Davenant Institute

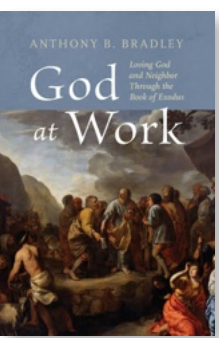


Why Brazil?: Pursuing Freedom in the Americas

By Lucas Berlanza and Alex Catharino, Translated by Helena Mussoi

An exploration of why the two New World giants of Brazil and the United States, despite shared geographical scale and Western Christian heritage, have charted different courses in their pursuit of ordered liberty.

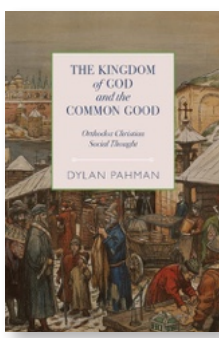
“Now is the time for the citizens of Brazil and the United States to learn from each other and work together for a rightly ordered liberty that promotes human dignity, encourages entrepreneurship, and produces genuine human flourishing.” – John C. Pinheiro, Director of Research, Acton Institute



God at Work: Loving God and Neighbor Through the Book of Exodus

by Anthony B. Bradley

Explores Israel’s deliverance story through the lenses of covenant theology, public theology, Reinhold Niebuhr’s understanding of sin and anxiety, and Karen Horney’s psychoanalytic theory of basic anxiety.



The Kingdom of God and the Common Good: Orthodox Christian Social Thought

by Dylan Pahman

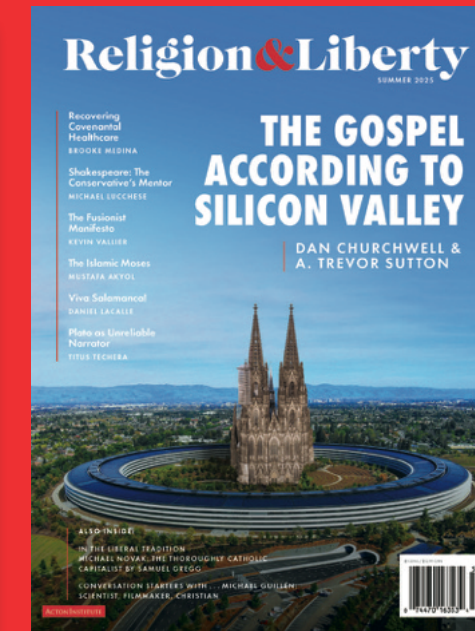
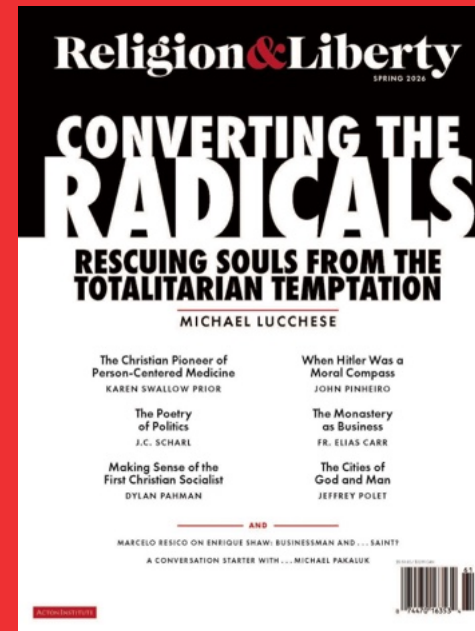
Surveys Scripture, Orthodox Church history, and modern economics to provide the frameworks, principles, and tools needed to fulfill Christ’s teaching today.

WE FORM LEADERS THROUGH RIGOROUS TEACHING
GROUNDED IN FAITH, ECONOMICS, AND THE DIGNITY
OF THE HUMAN PERSON.

PUBLICATIONS

Along with published books, Acton remains a trusted source for social and cultural commentary via its circulated publications, *Religion & Liberty* and *The Journal of Markets & Morality*.

Religion & Liberty, along with Religion & Liberty Daily, remains one of the Institute's most widely-read publications, with more than 10,800 readers in 2025, including those sold via placements at Barnes & Noble locations. Acton's many contributors brought opinion commentary on a wide variety of issues to the public square, continuing the Institute's robust track record of elevating the tone and intellectual caliber of our many cultural debates and hot-button questions.

JOURNAL OF MARKETS
& MORALITY

The 2025 Journal of Markets & Morality included contributing scholars from

- George Mason University
- Emory University
- Georgetown University
- The University of Osnabruck (Germany)
- Vrije University (Amsterdam)
- Alphacrucis University (Australia).

The 2025 edition included 19 articles, 5 book reviews, and a symposium on economic ethics in Judaism and early Christianity.

The Journal of Markets & Morality is a peer-reviewed, open-access academic journal published by the Acton Institute. The journal promotes intellectual exploration of the relationship between economics and morality from both social science and theological perspectives.



TOP PERFORMING ONLINE ARTICLES:

- 1 Philosophical Roots of Wokeism**
by Bishop Robert Barron
 - 2 How the Most Influential Novel Ever Written Has Been Misunderstood**
by John Rodden
 - 3 Lewis & Tolkien's War Against Grimdark**
by Andrew Gillsmith
 - 4 AI and the Discipline of Human Flourishing**
by A. Trevor Sutton
 - 5 The Atoning Death of the Last Scapegoat**
by Fr. Elias Carr
 - 6 JRR Tolkien: Writing as Discovery**
by J.C. Scharl
 - 7 The Islamic Moses**
by Mustafa Akyol
 - 8 The Teacher as Prophet: John Dewey's Liberating Education**
by Jeffrey Polet
 - 9 Tetris and the Birth of an Obsession**
by Peter Tonguette
 - 10 C.I. Scofield: God's Self-Made Man**
by Daniel G. Hummel
 - 11 Why Postliberalism Failed**
by Catherine Ruth Pakaluk

CENTER FOR SOCIAL FLOURISHING

In 2025, the Acton Institute's Center for Social Flourishing (CSF) continued its work to find new solutions for the alleviation of global poverty. This included hosting several events, engaging leaders in civil society, businesses, and churches to promote the conditions for people to lead good and fulfilling lives.

2025 CSF EVENTS

Social Engineering the Poor *Jacksonville, FL*
Explored a range of topics including education, charity, the market, welfare, and family.

Rethinking Charity *New Orleans, LA*
Provided a framework for addressing social challenges in one's community, grounded in local agency, principles of economics, and the dignity of the human person.

Poverty, Inc. Screenings *Denver, CO and Detroit, MI*
Special screenings of the award-winning film "Poverty Inc." featuring Q&A with the film's director, Michael Matheson Miller, and Senegalese entrepreneur, Magatte Wade.



COLLINS CENTER
FOR ABRAHAMIC HERITAGE

Acton's Collins Center for Abrahamic Heritage remains a key convener, bringing together different faith traditions to advance freedom, and providing ongoing dialogue on the issues that drive almost 4 billion worshippers around the world. At Acton University 2025, the Collins Center continued to drive attendee interest, with the interfaith panel on Jewish, Christian, and Muslim perspectives on campus free speech being the most attended optional event of the conference.



"People of different faiths don't need to make war, oppress each other, or wait to convert each other in order to uphold the human dignity of all people and to work towards freedom together."

**- Nathan Mech,
Collins Center Founder**

"The Collins Center Leadership Cohort [at AU] provided a crucial additional layer of community, spiritual exploration and intellectual stimulation - between tailored programming and casual interaction, the CCAH elevated the AU experience beyond all expectations.....as an observant Orthodox Jew, it was refreshing and a pleasure to engage with so many other people of faith, both laypersons and clergy, from the US and from across the world, who also cherish liberty grounded in tradition and common values."

**- Yonatan Green, Fellow, Georgetown
Center for the Constitution,
Georgetown University**



POVERTY TRAP: HOW BIG PLANS TO END POVERTY BROKE THE PROMISE OF AMERICA

From the creators of the award-winning documentary Poverty, Inc. comes a new film about social and material poverty in the United States. POVERTY TRAP examines how big plans to end poverty broke the promise of America—and what communities are doing to renew it.

In 2025, the Acton team completed 51 interviews for the film, including trips to Colorado, Washington D.C., and Scotland. After screening a teaser trailer at Acton University, the first draft of Poverty Trap was completed in November 2025, with several advance screenings and film festival submissions following.



Advance Screening Commentary

"I feel that the film did an incredible job of showing how legislation and government ideas are not always the solution. There were so many redemptive stories."

"The consequences of poor policies revealed through personal stories. The film beautifully highlights the criticality of personal responsibility catalyzed and strengthened by love and community support."

2025 EVENTS:

**Rome: Christian-Muslim Dialogue Highlights
Pilgrimage, Freedom, and Interfaith Engagement
During Jubilee Year at Vatican College**

**London: "Shared Horizons": An Interfaith Event Held
at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in London**

**Glasgow: Interfaith Dialogue on Pilgrimage and the
Right to Religious Liberty**

**Children of Abraham Day ft. Founder Farhat Qazzi
in Grand Rapids, MI**

**"The Majlis at the Acton Institute," five events
highlighting a variety of topics related to Islam and
liberty**

**Hearts Awakened: How War Stirred a Surge in
Jewish Charitable Giving ft. Dr. Yehonatan Givat**

**Virtual debate on Christianity and Liberalism with
Carl Trueman and Vincent Muñoz**



SCAN THE CODE TO
LEARN MORE ABOUT THE
COLLINS CENTER FOR
ABRAHAMIC HERITAGE

SCHOLARS AND AFFILIATES

Our scholars’ work informs not only academic discourse, but also public policy, education, and cultural renewal across the globe. Through original research, publications, books, media appearances, and cultural commentary, the scholars are the engine that drives all of Acton’s efforts forward and provides the human connection for audiences to substantively engage with Acton’s ideas and values.



John C. Pinheiro, PhD
History, American Founding, & Catholic Social Teaching



Anthony B. Bradley, PhD
Social Science, Theology, & Protestant Social Thought



Dan Hugger
European History, Catholic Social Teaching, & Lord Acton



Dylan Pahman, PhD
Orthodox Social Thought, Historical Theology, & Abraham Kuyper



Stephen Barrows, PhD
Free Market Economics, Fertility Crisis, Economics & AI



Alejandro Chafuen, PhD
Economics, Security, Latin America



Noah Gould
Corporate Social Responsibility, Civil Society



Michael Matheson Miller
Poverty Alleviation, Philosophy, Economic Development



Nathan Mech
Ethics, Natual Theology, Interfaith Relations



Vladimir Snurenco, PhD
Economics, Socialism, Poverty Alleviation



Mustafa Akyol, PhD
Islam & Islamic World



Hunter Baker, PhD
American Government & Public Theology



Anne Bradley, PhD
Economics & Christian Political Economy



Victor Claar, PhD
Economics, Trade, & Poverty



Taras Dzyubanskyy, PhD
Catholic Theology, Interfaith Dialogue, & Religious Liberty



Rachel Ferguson, PhD
Economics, Business Ethics, & Protestant Social Thought



Samuel Goldman, PhD
Political Science & Humanities



Samuel Gregg, PhD
Political Economy, Adam Smith, & F.A. Hayek



David Hebert, PhD
Economic Policy, Trade, Debt, & Tariffs



Manoj Mathew
Asia, Middle East, & Africa



Clara Piano, PhD
Family Economics, Law and Economics, & Public Choice



Rev. Johnson Rethinasamy, PhD
Affiliate Pastor



Stephanie Slade
Liberal Studies & Conservative Thought



Rev. Trevor Sutton, PhD
Protestant Theology & Technology



Kevin Vallier, PhD
Philosophy, Political Science, & Artificial Intelligence

EMERGING LEADERS AND ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

One of Acton’s premiere programs is its annual Emerging Leaders Cohort, a 2-month program designed to give standout young professionals a robust grounding in philosophy, leadership, and Acton’s core vision of a free and virtuous society. In 2025, after fielding applications from 319 candidates across a wide array of countries and religious backgrounds, Acton welcomed 19 Emerging Leaders

to its headquarters in Grand Rapids. Emerging Leaders participated in seminars led by Acton scholars and friends on the history of economic thought, the intersection of freedom and virtue, and many other topics, with the seminar highlight being a lecture on “Adam Smith’s Theory of Society” with Nobel Laureate Vernon Smith and an etiquette dinner with him and his wife, Candace.

“During my time in the Emerging Leaders Program, I have been blessed to develop a keener understanding of the way the market works and its essential humanity. While Acton holds steadfast to a belief in the possibility of a virtuous market and polity, it makes no bones about the fact that markets and governments are human institutions, and thus must be guarded and guided by those same moral principles which form us from childhood. The ELP takes a nuanced approach educating students in these market principles.”



Maggie Sonne
University of Dallas

Kauan Souza,
Universidade
Presbiteriana Mackenzie



“The freedom we were given to express our perspectives and to listen respectfully to opposing views created an intellectually and personally enriching environment. The debates were not only relevant—they were truly transformative. I felt part of a community of truth-seekers.”

NOVAK AWARD RECIPIENT

In 2025, the Acton Institute awarded Kirstin Anderson Birkhaug the Novak Award in recognition for her outstanding research in the field of American political thought, including her dissertation book manuscript examining the role of founding-era women in constructing ideals of American civic life. The Novak Award recognizes scholars early in their academic career who demonstrate outstanding intellectual merit in advancing the understanding of religion’s connection to human dignity, the rule of law, limited government, religious liberty and freedom in economic life.



Kirstin Anderson Birkhaug
Assistant Professor of Political Science, Hope College

AMPLIFY



2025 DIGITAL HIGHLIGHTS



5M+
VIEWS TO DATE

In December 2025, Acton's ongoing fight to highlight the plight of Hong Kong dissident and political prisoner Jimmy Lai took yet another turn. Lai was convicted under China's national security law of conspiracy to commit collusion with foreign forces and conspiracy to commit sedition. In response, the Acton Institute highlighted the injustice of the conviction with a statement, podcasts, and media commentary from Acton leaders including Father Robert Sirico and COO Stephen Barrows.

Following the conviction, Acton saw a tremendous resurgence of their award-winning film *The Hong Konger*, which covered Jimmy Lai's story in detail. *The Hong Konger* became Acton's top video in 2025, reaching over 5,000,000 views. The Chinese translation of the film became Acton's #3 top video of 2025, reaching 80,000+ views with exceptionally high viewer retention.



Father Sirico's Statement

"Those who now hold the power in China, will not always hold the power and the potency of the culture of life, the desire of people to live free, to be creative, to speak as they will, to worship as they will, will ultimately triumph."



109K
DOWNLOADS

69
EPISODES

Acton Line, now on video!

Acton Line, the official podcast of the Acton Institute, brings together writers, economists, religious leaders, and more to bridge the gap between good intentions and sound economics. In 2025, Acton offered the podcast in both audio and video formats for the first time!

Subscribe





ACTON IN THE MEDIA

This past year, Acton maintained its status as a trusted authority on issues relevant to entrepreneurship, faith and virtue, and community formation, providing expert commentary and driving cultural conversation on a wide-range of popular media outlets.



ACTON AND BUSINESS

Acton President Kris Mauren appeared on the WOW Factor podcast, joining a star-studded roster of guests including Bob Woodson, Heather Templeton Dill, David Bahnsen, and Energy Secretary Chris Wright, to discuss leadership, fostering generosity, and protecting respect for religion in a secular world.

Fr. Sirico spoke to Catholic business leaders across the West Coast and Canada in a series of Legatus Chapter meetings, reaching audiences from Vancouver to Portland to Orange County.

EWTN highlighted Acton's "Catholic Shark Tank" event, allowing businesses to present ideas to investors in a religious setting.



ACTON AND FAITH

Acton scholars penned expert commentary on a variety of faith-related issues in 2025, including an article from Fr. Sirico in The Free Press on "Christmas and the Beauty of Imperfection."

"The same God who lavishes creation with abundant variety enters that variety himself to heal it. Christmas is the moment the immutable God embraces the mutable world, dignifies it, and begins the long work of restoring it. The manger is the world's most astonishing dappling—the infinite contained in the finite, the light refracted through flesh."

- Fr. Robert Sirico, The Free Press



ACTON AND COMMUNITY

Acton leaders participated in a variety of podcast interviews and panel discussions on social thought and creating upward mobility:

- Dylan Pahman appeared on The Econ Playground discussing Orthodox social thought and at the Ciceronian Society for a panel on "A Theology of Markets".
- Dan Hugger joined the Saving Elephants podcast to discuss federalism and led a seminar in Hungary on the History of the American Conservative movement.
- Dr. Anthony B. Bradley discussed how Grand Rapids can lead the way on upward mobility in a panel sponsored by the Believe! Journal.



THE PAPAL TRANSITION AND ACTON'S VOICE

During the papal transition, the Acton Institute, including the Acton Rome office, functioned as a trusted voice for both leaders and broader readership around the world seeking to understand the forces and questions at play. Acton leaders were cited over 40 times in outlets covering the transition, with the Institute putting out substantial material during the process to evaluate Pope Francis' legacy, educate the public on the details of the Conclave, and answering other frequently asked questions about the transition process.

"The next pope or a future one will seek to clarify the myriad ambiguities and unclear messaging on moral and doctrinal matters that have defined the last 12 years. This is imperative not only to maintain the credibility of the Petrine Office, but for the health of the universal Church."

- Fr. Robert Sirico, Fox Opinion

Acton experts provided commentary on the transition for outlets including The Daily Wire, The Wall Street Journal, First Things, The Dispatch, EWTN, ABC, NewsNation, Newsmax, and Fox Nation, with Fr. Sirico helping cover the Conclave live on Sky News.

40+

PAPAL TRANSITION
NEWS CITATIONS

WALL STREET JOURNAL

sky news

The New York Times

THE FREE PRESS

npr

THE DAILY WIRE

NEWS NATION

EWTN NEWS
Global Coverage. Catholic Perspective.

FOX NEWS
media

News
max

SKY
ITALIA

The Dispatch

LEADERSHIP

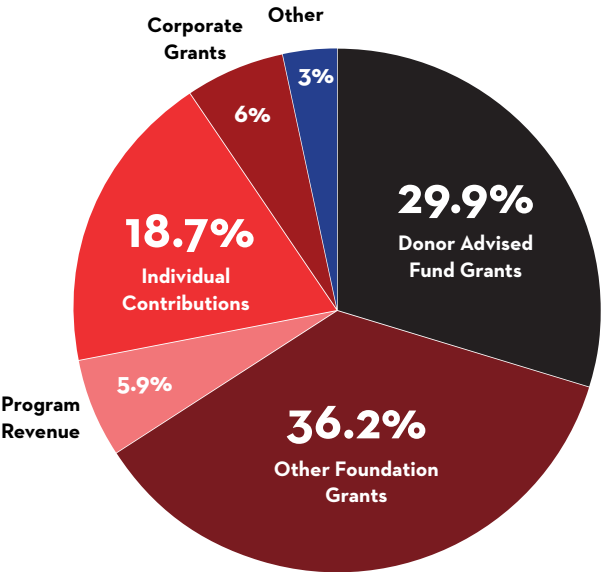


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LAUNCHING THE LORD ACTON LEGACY SOCIETY

This year, the Acton Institute renewed its planned giving program under a new name, the Lord Acton Legacy Society, to provide donors a formal way to extend their support of a free and virtuous society beyond their lifetime. Named for the historian and statesman whose words shape the Institute’s mission, the Society invites donors to include Acton in their estate plans through bequests, IRA charitable rollovers, life insurance policies, donor-advised funds, and gifts of property.

Members receive a complimentary lifetime subscription to Acton publications, recognition on the headquarters’ legacy wall, invitations to private receptions and events, and annual personal updates on how their commitment is shaping Acton’s work.



FUNDRAISING

\$9.3M
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"LIMITATION IS ESSENTIAL TO AUTHORITY.
A GOVERNMENT IS LEGITIMATE ONLY IF IT
IS EFFECTIVELY LIMITED."

- LORD ACTON

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