

ACTON notes

Acton Institute Newsletter

January 2009, Volume 19, Number 1



“Connecting good intentions with sound economics”

St. Cecilia, Nashville, TN Celebrates its Honor Roll recognition.

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President's Message

"Government has no magic button it can push to make a recession go away."

The economic trends of our time have fundamentally challenged our nation's commitment to free markets. In hard times, people are more willing to turn to the state to regulate economic life. But these steps have long-term costs in terms of human liberty and the blessings of prosperity.

There are many things that the government can do to alleviate the suffering that comes with recession. It can cut taxes and regulations on business to make hiring easier. It can reduce regulations in the medical marketplace to reduce costs, and it can provide incentives for charitable giving. Government spending should be reduced, not increased, in order to free up resources for the private sector to adjust and grow.

Beyond that, there is not much government can do. A recession is a response to an overinflated bubble economy. The government response should permit liquidation where it needs to take place, so that the foundations of viable prosperity can be built. Government has no magic button it can push to make a recession go away. To believe that it does is a fallacy.

I find it interesting to watch how the recession has coincided with downward pressure on prices. This is a real blessing, and it probably will not last. Prices are being pushed downward by slower growth and the reticence on the part of lenders and borrowers to effect new credit arrangements. Falling prices mean that the economically disadvantaged can afford food, a car to replace the one falling apart, clothing, and gasoline to get to work or to visit families. Falling house prices mean that, perhaps for the first time, the poor can actually afford a nice home.

This is only one example among many of the dangers associated with attempting to reverse a recession by force. History provides many examples of recessions that play themselves out and then fold back into recovery. We need to have the confidence to let economic freedom do its job.

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



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rev. Robert A. Sirico".

Rev. Robert A. Sirico, President

ACTONINSTITUTE

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Catholic High School Honor Roll Recognizes Schools

The National Catholic High School Honor Roll announced its fifth selection of the best 50 Catholic secondary schools in the United States in November 2008. Ten brand new honorees were included in the prestigious list this year. Additionally, eight schools have received the top recognition for each of the five years the honor roll has been in existence. Before the Honor Roll's launch in 2004, there were no national evaluations for Catholic secondary schools.

The purpose of the honor roll is to recognize and encourage excellence in Catholic secondary education. Schools that excel in academic excellence, Catholic identity, and civic education receive valuable recognition and feedback through the honor roll program. "We feel these three areas are the best way to evaluate the overall success of a Catholic high school," said Anthony Pienta, program coordinator for the Catholic High School Honor Roll at the Acton Institute.

Highlighting the importance of Catholic identity,

the president of Cardinal Stritch High School, Fr. David Reinhart, declared, "Not all Catholic schools are created equal and many are not working to make sure they are staying true to their Catholic mission. Thank you for recognizing those who are." Cardinal Stritch High School in Toledo, Ohio, is a three-time honoree, was again included in the top 50 schools this year.

Denise Funke, director for formation for girls at the Highlands School in Irving, Texas, noted, "The Acton Institute has given a great opportunity to Catholic educators with the Honor Roll. It recognizes those that strive to maintain high academic standards, while also being faithful to their identity and mission as a Catholic school." The Acton Institute would like to thank all of the schools who have participated in this valuable survey.

You can view the entire list of the top 50 schools, as well as lists of the ten honorable mention schools in each category by visiting the website www.chshonor.org.



Cardinal Stritch holds a rally for their nomination



Notre Dame Regional shows off its Top 50 banner

From Our Conference Participants

I'm glad one of my fellow seminarians informed me of the Acton Institute. I was very encouraged by the caliber, scope, and depth of the various lectures and especially by the glowing endorsements of the many returning attendees.

—Steve Sniscak
Cromwell, Connecticut

My participation at the Acton sponsored conference helped me to see that the Gospel not only enables but ensures the building up of a free and virtuous society.

—Joseph R. Upton
Emmitsburg, Maryland

Acton Cosponsors Rome Event

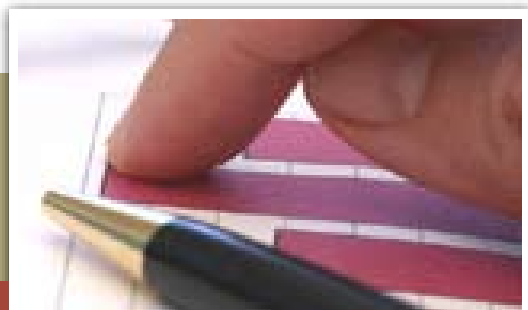
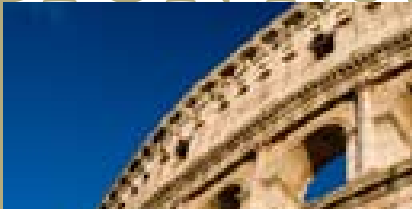
On Wednesday, December 3, the Acton Institute and the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See cosponsored the conference, "Philanthropy and Human Rights: Creating Space for Caritas in Civil Society" at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome, Italy. Over 150 attendees heard addresses on a range of themes relating to charity, the practice of philanthropy, and the dynamic role played by civil society and other non-state actors in alleviating moral, spiritual, and material poverty. Rev. Robert Sirico chaired the conference's two sessions. Speakers included the Grand Master of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, His Most Eminent Highness Fra Matthew Festing; the American ambassador to the Holy See, Her Excellency Professor Mary Ann Glendon; the incoming president of the American Enterprise Institute, Professor Arthur Brooks; Mr. Frank Hanna of Hanna Capital; Dr. Jürgen Liminski of Aid to the Church in Need; and American theologian Mr. Michael Novak. Among the attendees were members of the Roman Curia, several ambassadors and *chargés d'affaires*, faculty from pontifical universities, many journalists from

the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights. Reflecting on the conference, the director of Acton's Rome office, Mr. Kishore Jayabalan commented: "In the debate about the roles of government and market exchange in realizing basic moral and material goods, civil society is often forgotten, especially in Western Europe. Active and widespread philanthropy, as we find in the United States, is one indication that civil society is flourishing."

Controlling the Weather

There is a saying that every day is a picture-perfect day, even in the middle of the most terrible storms and adverse weather conditions. You may be wondering, how is it possible that every day is picture perfect? The saying continues that such occasions are a pleasant reminder of the fact that at least when it comes to the weather, God and not the government is in charge. This anecdote is a subtle reminder of the scope of the government's influence over our lives, and we must remember that this reach extends to our estate planning. Government rules and regulations have already established many of the ways in which your

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religious and secular media, and a large number of Catholic clergy.

The speakers addressed many subjects from a variety of disciplinary and professional standpoints. Fra Festing and Mr. Hanna highlighted the worrying contemporary phenomenon of governments using their contributions to private charities, including those of a religious inspiration, to try to force private organizations to embrace policies to which they are ethically opposed. Ambassador Glendon focused on the superior ability of voluntary associations and religious organizations to realize many of the aspirational rights contained in

property will be distributed until you supersede them with your own will. Often, the rules created by the government are in conflict with your wishes for your family and plans for your estate. Yet, surprisingly, the majority of Americans do not have a will. Regardless of personal circumstances, a will benefits your estate and ensures assets are distributed as you desire.

While the Acton Institute cannot offer legal advice, we do have resources available and a staff member ready to assist you in beginning the process. Please contact Charles Roelofs at (616) 454-3080 or e-mail croelofs@acton.org for assistance.

A New Year for the Acton Lecture Series

On January 15, the Acton Lecture Series will resume again at the St. Cecilia Music Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The first lecturer this year is Dr. Donald P. Condit, who will be delivering an address titled “Our Next Exigency: How Ought Health Care Be Reformed?” Dr. Condit, MD, MBA, is an orthopedic surgeon specializing in hand surgery in Grand Rapids. The Acton Institute will be publishing Dr. Condit’s Christian Social Thought Series monograph titled *Health Care Reform* in 2009.

Also lecturing in 2009 are Acton’s President Rev. Robert Sirico, Mr. Lawrence W. Reed, Dr. Samuel Gregg, Mrs. Teresa Tomeo, and Mr. Michael Miller.

Mr. Lawrence W. Reed will be speaking on the engaging topic “The Importance of Character in a Free Society.” In this lecture, he will discuss the character crisis in America and what we can do about it. Mr. Reed’s lecture is scheduled for May 7. He is the former president of the Mackinac Center for Public Policy and the new president of the Foundation for Economic

Education. Also in December of 2007, Reed was named visiting senior fellow with The Heritage Foundation in Washington, D.C.

Speaking in September 2009 will be Mrs. Tomeo, who will deliver a lecture on “Managing the Media in a Crisis Situation.” Mrs. Tomeo is a veteran broadcast journalist with more than twenty years of experience as a radio and TV news reporter. Currently Mrs. Tomeo is an author, syndicated Catholic talk show host, professional speaker, and media consultant.

Also scheduled for 2009 in the lecture series are two well known Acton speakers who will deliver remarks on the financial crisis. On February 12, Dr. Samuel Gregg will deliver an address on the topic “America’s Economic Crisis: Looking Back, Looking Forward.” Dr. Gregg is director of research at the Acton Institute. Mr. Michael Miller will deliver a lecture on the international financial crisis in April. Mr. Miller is director of programs at the Acton Institute.



ACTON in the News

It was the institution of government that unleashed those vices of greed and avarice encouraging people to build on sand.

—Excerpted from Rev. Robert Sirico’s article in *National Review Online*

Ray Nothstine

Title: Speech Codes Limit Campus Freedom
Publisher: *The Christian Post*
Date: 12.11.08

Rev. Robert Sirico

Title: A House Built on Sand
Publisher: *National Review Online*
Date: 11.25.08

Rev. Robert Sirico

Title: Surveying the Bailout Economy
Program: *Morning Air*
Air Date: 11.24.08

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 continuing mission to promote a free and virtuous society. You may choose to donate using the envelope provided, or you may visit <https://secure.lexi.net/acton> to make a secure donation online. We send our heartfelt thanks to those 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.



George Gilder speaking to the audience at AU



AU audience listening in

Acton and You

The Acton Institute is pleased to announce that registration is now open for the 2009 Acton University (AU), which will take place on June 16-19 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This year's expanded curriculum and distinguished international faculty will once again lead an in-depth four-day exploration of the intellectual foundations of a free society.

Acton University is open to undergraduate and graduate students, nonprofit professionals, pastors, professors, business people, and anyone interested in deepening their understanding of the integration of sound economics, rig-

orous philosophy, and the Judeo-Christian faith.

Last year's conference featured attendees who represented over 51 countries. This year's conference will feature informative and valuable faculty panel discussions. Classes offered at Acton University will jump from fifty to sixty, and there will be a number of exciting additions to the faculty, which includes Princeton professor Dr. Robert P. George. If you have additional questions about Acton University, please contact Kara Eagle at keagle@acton.org or visit the website at www.acton.org/actonu/.

Register Now for the 2009 Conference June 16-19

Registration for Acton University is already filling up! If you or someone you know would like to learn about the foundations of a society sustained by freedom and virtue, apply today at www.acton.org/ActonU



ACTON UNIVERSITY

Grand Rapids, MI

- ✓ **Design** your own curriculum.
- ✓ **Meet** and listen to international experts in their fields.
- ✓ **Network** with people from all over the world.
- ✓ **Deepen** your understanding of the integration of sound economics, rigorous philosophy, and Judeo-Christian faith.

ACTON Book Shoppe



The Victory of Socialism

by Michael Miller

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the success of free markets many believed that socialism had seen its last days. But socialism did not die. In Latin America, Europe, and even the US, proponents of socialist ideas are gaining influence. While we celebrated the triumph of freedom has socialism won over the culture?

CD 45 mins Original Price \$11.95 Sale \$10.00



And Why Not? Morality and Business

by François Michelin

This book-length extended interview provides fascinating insights into the mind of François Michelin, the former managing partner of Michelin Group. He sat down with two journalists and discussed his management philosophy and his deeply felt Christian faith. Mr. Michelin speaks eloquently about the creative dimension of free enterprise and the commercial world.

Paperback 91 pages Original Price \$12.00 Sale \$8.50



Banking, Justice and the Common Good

by Samuel Gregg

The art of creating, managing, loaning, and investing money has always been fraught with moral hazards. Unfortunately, the widespread habit of viewing banking in a less-than positive light has contributed to a misunderstanding of a human activity that not only contributes to human prosperity, but also creates a sphere of endeavor in which people can pursue virtue.

Paperback 96 pages Original Price \$8.00 Sale \$6.00

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Make checks payable to "Acton Institute." For orders in the United States, Canada, and Mexico: for the first item, add US \$6.75 for shipping; plus US \$1.00 for each additional item. Overseas orders: US \$8.75 for the first item, plus US \$1.75 for each additional item.

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Calendar of Events

ACTON INSTITUTE EVENTS

Date	Event	Location
Jan 8-11	Capitalism, Free Trade, and Globalization Cosponsored with Liberty Fund, Inc.	Grand Rapids, MI
Jan 15	Our Next Exigency: How Ought Health Care Be Reformed? Dr. Donald P. Condit to speak at Acton Lecture Series	Grand Rapids, MI
Feb 12	America's Economic Crisis: Looking Back, Looking Forward Dr. Samuel Gregg to speak at Acton Lecture Series	Grand Rapids, MI

STAFF ACTIVITIES/DEADLINES

Date	Event	Location
Jan 17	Centurions Program Rev. Robert Sirico to speak on the economy	Lansdowne, VA
Jan 17	Notre Dame Mendoza School of Business Michael Miller to speak	Notre Dame, IN

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