

ACTON notes

Acton Institute Newsletter

January / February 2011, Volume 21, Number 1



Reformation Wall Geneva, Farel, Calvin, Bèze, Knox © Ruth Nguyen, image wikimedia.org

“Connecting good intentions with sound economics”

In This Issue

- Acton Partners with Refo500 • R&L Publishes Anniversary Issue
- Acton's New Director of Programs • Acton Univ. Registration Open • The Virtue of Prosperity

President's Message

"This is why being out of work can lead us to do a personal inventory of our lives."

With unemployment running above 9 percent, and as high as 20 and 30 percent in some sectors of the population, people who are looking for work are having their values and character challenged as never before.

They are being asked to accept salaries lower than they would have ever imagined. They are feeling pressured into work situations they never thought they would be in. They are being asked to learn skills they never thought they would need.

This is why being out of work can lead us to do a personal inventory of our lives.

Clearly, the problem of unemployment is more than a test of the economic system. It is a test of a people's character and their fiber. How many of us are prepared for this? In our country of great wealth, and great economic security, most of us have not faced problems along these lines.

Several generations ago, millions of people faced a much more difficult period during the Great Depression. Many of those who grew up in the Depression went on to become members of the "Greatest Generation." There is no question that the long period of suffering and deprivation in the 1930s reinforced for many the traditional values of thrift, hard work, saving, and long-term economic planning.

Economic conditions can shape our moral character, and it works in reverse too. An essential precondition for investment is saving. Entrepreneurship is the embodiment of good judgement and alertness to opportunity. Keeping promises is the essence of the contractually based market economy.

This is one of the many problems with government entitlement programs. They short circuit the learning process that comes with freedom and free markets, and the manner in which they teach us moral values.

Part of the mission of the Acton Institute is to draw these connections and explain how we all benefit from a free, open, and virtuous society. We are grateful for your support. Please keep those who are struggling with unemployment in your prayers.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Robert A. Sirico". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Robert A. Sirico, President

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

ACTONINSTITUTE

161 Ottawa Avenue NW, Suite 301 • Grand Rapids, MI 49503 • USA • www.acton.org

Acton Partners with Refo500

The Acton Institute is joining forces with Refo500, a project that will bring international attention to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation which takes place in 2017. In 1517, Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses on the The Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany.

Refo500 is engaging with a variety of partner organizations to promote the importance of the Reformation period and its relevance for today's world and churches. Acton scholars will also play a role in many aspects of the academic promotion related to the observance of the anniversary. Not only with their attendance at conferences, but the *Journal of Markets & Morality* will publish a translation of Abraham Kuyper's commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism. The journal's executive editor Jordan Ballor offered his thoughts on Acton's role in promoting the Reformation's anniversary:

The impact of history, especially the influence of the Christian church and the Reformation period, on the modern world is of the utmost

significance today. Amidst the feelings of rootlessness and the search for meaning characterizing contemporary life, it is essential that we know better how we arrived at this point.

These are linked biblical questions: Where have you come from? Where are you going? We don't get one without the other, and in this relationship between the past, present, and future lies the importance of understanding the Reformation

and its relevance for today.

The themes of the Refo500 project, which include "Money and Power," "Art and Culture," and "Freedom and Preaching," resonate with the Acton Institute's mission to promote a society characterized by freedom and virtue. The aims of Refo500 are also consistent with the institute's work in creating "The Birth of Freedom" documentary and curriculum products for the importance of communicating the roots of freedom in Western civilization.

"Refo500 will be instrumental in helping Acton to carry its message around the globe..."



Castle Cathedral door in Wittenberg © Cethegus. Image wikimedia.org



Refo500 helps bring attention to the anniversary of the Reformation

From Our Conference Participants

What captured me was the charisma of the presenters and the conviction with which they spoke about economic justice in the context of our current systems.

—Lubna M. Nabi
Houston, Texas

This conference reinforced my personal held belief that the entrepreneurial spirit is a reflection of God's inherent creativity that we share by virtue of the fact we are made in His image.

—Steve Sommers
Pasadena, California

R&L Publishes Anniversary Issue

Religion & Liberty's double issue is an Acton 20th Anniversary tribute featuring an interview with Acts 3 ministry founder John Armstrong as well as a collection from some of our best interviews over the years.

The number of impressive figures in *Religion & Liberty* who have been interviewed speaks to the professionalism of Acton and its global influence. Some of the notable figures who have been interviewed over the years and were featured in the anniversary issue include Baroness Margaret Thatcher, Sir John Marks Templeton, Mr. Chuck Colson, Cardinal Avery Dulles, and Dr. Walter Williams.

R&L's managing editor Ray Nothstine said of the compiled collection of interviews:

We were very mindful of looking to highlight responses that really represent a range of timeless truths in the Gospel, the importance of human liberty, and the importance of religion and moral formation in society. The biggest challenge of this anniversary project was making decisions about what was going to be

Acton's New Director of Programs

Dr. Stephen Grabill has been promoted to Director of Programs and International at the Acton Institute. He holds a Ph.D. in systematic theology from Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids. Dr. Grabill's research interests include Protestant social thought, natural law, economic history, the thought of Abraham Kuyper, stewardship, and Christian social ethics. He will continue in his previous academic role as senior research scholar in theology with Acton. He will also be actively engaged in network and capacity building among evangelicals through an exciting new initiative funded by the Kern Family Foundation.

Before taking over the programs department at Acton, Dr. Grabill served as the executive editor of the *Journal of Markets & Morality*. Under his guidance, the journal went from just an idea to its current status as a leading interdisciplinary publication. During his tenure at Acton, Dr. Grabill has also served as general editor of the new *NIV Stewardship Bible* published by Zondervan in 2009.

ACTON News



The R&L 20th Anniversary features a collection of our best interviews



Dr. Stephen Grabill

included in the issue. Still, there was a lot of great material that had to be excluded only because of space. That alone speaks to the rich and timeless content in the pages of R&L.

Nothstine also added that feedback on the issue has been very positive and declared, "We already have seen a significant uptick in submissions of authors wanting to publish in the pages of *R&L*." The forthcoming Winter issue of *R&L* will feature an interview with theologian and Church Fathers expert Dr. Thomas C. Oden.

Acton Univ. Registration Open

Registration for Acton University is currently open and courses will take place June 14 - 17 in Grand Rapids. Acton University is a unique, four-day exploration of the intellectual foundations of a free society. Guided by a distinguished, international faculty, Acton University is an opportunity to deepen your knowledge and integrate rigorous philosophy, Christian theology and sound economics. If you are interested in attending or learning more about Acton University you can visit the website at www.au.acton.org or contact Kara Eagle in the Grand Rapids office or by email at keagle@acton.org.

The Virtue of Prosperity

With the Center for Cultural Leadership, the Acton Institute is co-sponsoring a conference on February 25th and 26th in Newport Beach, Calif., titled “The Virtue of Prosperity.” The two-day conference poses the question, “In a day and age of economic disarray, are we really to believe that solutions can be found in free markets? Or did the economic meltdown of 2008 once and for all prove that free markets are the problem?”

Acton President Rev. Robert Sirico will deliver two addresses at the conference on “The Mandate for Virtuous Capitalism” and “Free Markets and the Promise of Hope.”

Dr. Jay Richards will also address the conference with a lecture based on his book *God, Money, and Greed*. Dr. Richards, a former research fellow and Director of Media at Acton, is currently a Senior Fellow at the Discovery Institute and a contributing editor of the American Enterprise Institute.

Giving the keynote address at the event is the pres-

ident of The King’s College in New York City, Mr. Dinesh D’Souza. D’Souza has been named one of America’s most influential conservative thinkers by the *New York Times Magazine*. The World Affairs Council lists him as one of the nation’s 500 leading authorities on international issues.

“D’Souza has been named one of America’s most influential conservative...”

Other speakers at the conference include Mr. David L. Bahnsen and Dr. P. Andrew Sandlin. Mr. Bahnsen is a Senior Vice President in the private client group of one of the premier Wall Street firms in this country and a senior fellow in economics and finance at the Center for Cultural Leadership. Dr. Sandlin is an ordained minister and president and founder of the Center for Cultural Leadership. He founded CCL in 2001 with the conviction that only eminently equipped cultural leaders will actually create a new Christian culture — and that only transformed Christians can transform the present anti-Christian culture of the West.

You can visit the website at www.moralcapitalism.com and register for the event online.



...are we really to believe that solutions can be found in free markets?



Mr. Dinesh D'Souza

ACTON in the News

“The doctrine of the incarnation is indeed a scandal, not to say improbable, to the modern mind...”

—Excerpted from Rev. Robert Sirico’s article in *The Detroit News*.

Dr. Donald Condit

Title: End of Life Planning & Health Care Reform
Program: *The Drew Mariani Show*
Air Date: 01.05.10

Rev. Robert Sirico

Title: Christmas Affirms Value of all People
Publisher: *The Detroit News*
Date: 12.21.10

Dr. Samuel Gregg

Title: Benedict XVI: Christian Radical
Program: *Kresta in the Afternoon*
Air Date: 12.08.10

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 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.

Updating your estate plans?

Please consider including Acton in those changes or notifying us of your current intentions.

For more information on how visit: www.acton.org/plannedgiving

Or contact Charles Roelofs at: 616-454-3080 or croelofs@acton.org

We value your current and future commitment to promoting freedom and virtue!

20th ANNIVERSARY DINNER



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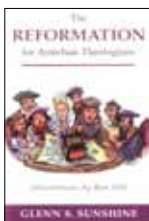


The Good of Affluence

By John R. Schneider

Schneider reopens the debate over the proper Christian attitude toward money, arguing, ultimately, that Scripture does indeed provide support for the responsible possession of wealth. This is a provocative book of Christian theology, written to help people seeking God in a culture that has grown from modern capitalism.

Hardcover 243 pages Original Price \$15.00 Sale \$10.00

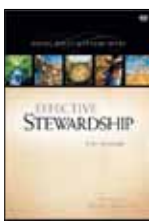


The Reformation for Armchair Theologians

By Glenn S. Sunshine

This readable, accessible narrative story of the Protestant Reformation is the fifth volume of the popular series with Westminster John Knox Press intended for "armchair theologians." Excellent for study groups, students, and even as a good starting point for those interested in the larger discipline of church history.

Softcover 264 pages Original Price \$17.00 Sale \$15.00

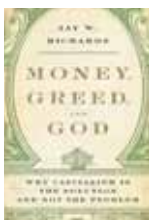


Effective Stewardship Curriculum DVD and Study Guide

Produced by Acton Media

Christian stewardship is about more than the money we drop into the collection plate. Stewardship is everything we do after we say we believe. In this five session video study, you will learn how to think critically and biblically about the areas of responsibility that have been entrusted to you by God.

Original Price \$30.00 Sale \$28.00



Money, Greed, and God

By Jay Richards

Jay Richards presents a new approach to capitalism, revealing how it's fully consistent with Jesus's teachings and the Christian tradition, while also showing why this system is our best bet for renewed economic vigor.

Hardcover 255 pages Original Price \$28.00 Sale \$24.00

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| The Reformation for Armchair Theologians | \$15.00 | | |
| Effective Stewardship Curriculum DVD and Study Guide | \$28.00 | | |
| Money, Greed, and God | \$24.00 | | |

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 |
|------------------|---|-------------------|
| Feb 17 | Acton on Tap Ray Nothstine to speak on Ronald Reagan and his faith | Grand Rapids, MI |
| Feb 24 | Scottsdale Luncheon Rev. Robert Sirico to speak | Scottsdale, AZ |
| Feb 25-26 | The Virtue of Prosperity Co-sponsored event with Center for Cultural Leadership | Newport Beach, CA |
| Jun 14-17 | Acton University | Grand Rapids, MI |

STAFF ACTIVITIES/DEADLINES

| Date | Event | Location |
|---------------|--|-----------------|
| Mar 17 | Public Lecture at Louisiana State University Dr. Samuel Gregg to speak | Baton Rouge, LA |

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