

ACTON notes

Acton Institute Newsletter

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credit: Wikimedia Commons

“connecting good intentions with sound economics”

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President's Message

"These technologies have spread art, beauty, and truth across the globe."

Many people I know are rather despairing about our future. This is contributing to a real and growing pessimism throughout society. I can understand all of these feelings but there is a potential mistake here. I've begun to think that those who are too attached to the day's headline news develop a bias toward thinking that the world is on a permanent downhill slide. The mistake is looking only at the bad things we know about without considering the good trends for the future.

Consider, for example, all the amazing technologies we are benefiting from today that would have been unheard and unimagined five or ten years ago. Digital communications—fueled by private investments, the market economy, and entrepreneurial risk—have connected the world as never before, making life much more efficient and easing poverty. These technologies have spread art, beauty, and truth across the globe.

The very nature of the market economy, which is an extension of human action and choice, is that we can't anticipate its results ahead of time. Markets are constantly surprising us with new ways of communicating, healing, teaching, creating, interacting. In a way, it reflects God's restoration of creation. Because we cannot know the shape of the future precisely, we tend to look only at the bad trends and form an overall picture that can be very bleak.

Such a bleak outlook on life can also cause us not to seize on the special opportunities that our times have given us for living out the dream of a free and virtuous life. If we understand free markets and the astounding way in which the Lord delivers us from despairing about our contemporary politics, we would temper our pessimism to realize that blessings can come to us when we least expect them.

Our age has given every living generation a difficult challenge. This challenge is unlike any we've faced in our past. Through prayer and hard work, we can build a beautiful future for truth and liberty. This is what we are working toward at the Acton Institute, and we are grateful for your support.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Rev. Robert Sirico". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Rev. Robert 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 Co-Sponsors Event at Cedarville University

In an ongoing effort to find creative ways to engage partnering organizations about whole life discipleship, Acton has created a program to co-sponsor one-day symposiums on selected seminary and university campuses around the United States.

The objective of these symposiums is to provide intense exposure to core ideas about whole life discipleship to the university community. In this way, Acton facilitates stronger Christian understanding and encourages continuing discussion and enrichment in the classroom after the conference itself is concluded. Participants will examine the interface of liberty, faith and learning in society, independently, through integration in their studies, and through ongoing Acton program opportunities.

On January 31st, the Acton Institute held a one-day symposium at Cedarville University titled “Caring For the Common Good: Why It’s Important To Integrate Faith, Work, and Economics.” The purpose of the event was to

“The purpose of the event was to present free-market views.”

present free-market views on economics that are grounded in the Christian tradition to professors, students and staff. Cedarville University is a private, co-educational liberal arts university located in the town of Cedarville, Ohio.

Rudy Carrasco of Partners Worldwide spoke on caring for the poor along with their responsibilities. Matt Zainea, teaching pastor at Blythefield Hills Baptist Church spoke on “Theology and Economics: Seeing the Whole.” In addition, Acton convened a panel discussion involving Rudy and Matt along with Cedarville University professors Dr. Bert Wheeler and Dr. Jeff Haymond. The panel was moderated by Acton Institute Director of Programs and International, Dr. Stephen Grabill.

The day concluded with a dinner attended by Cedarville administration and professors for the Bible, Business and Economics department discussing the day’s content and how this could be integrated within the University.



Cedarville University in southwest Ohio



Rudy Carrasco of Partners Worldwide

From Our Conference Participants

I want to extend a word of thanksgiving for those who so thoughtfully care enough to render this opportunity for us to attend this Acton conference.

—Donna Edwards
Plano, Texas

It was invaluable to interact with thoughtful individuals from across the theological spectrum and from a wide variety of professional backgrounds. Thank you again for investing in me through the lectures and financial aid.

—Chad Bogosian
Springdale, Arkansas

New Europe Book Forthcoming

Contemporary Europe is in a state of profound economic and cultural crisis. Out-of-control debt and spending, population decline, high unemployment (with catastrophic levels prevailing among young people), low levels of entrepreneurship, a discredited political class that more than ever seems far more intent on protecting its own position than serving the common good, and bloated and unsustainable welfare states – all of this sums up the economic state of the European Union these days. Unfortunately, many of these descriptions can be just as easily applied to the United States.

In his forthcoming book due out in November, *Becoming Europe: Economic Decline, Culture and America's Future* (published by Encounter Books), Acton's Director of Research Dr. Samuel Gregg examines the origins and nature of the European economic model, and illustrates how similar dynamics are at work in much of America. Using the idea of economic culture, Gregg illustrates, in language accessible for anyone interested in our contemporary economic challenges, how the

something, Gregg states, would be disastrous not just for America, but for the West as a whole.

Acton Plans E-Book Roll Out

The Acton Institute plans to increase visibility and raise awareness of many of its books by publishing e-books. Web Coordinator David Lohmeyer is creating separate websites for each publication.

Fair Trade? Its Prospects as a Poverty Solution by Victor Claar is the first site up and running and can be viewed at www.fairtradeandfreetrade.com. The sites will offer information about the author, articles related to the subject matter, other books in the series, and links for purchasing the digital or print format. Samples of the publication for reading will also be included. In most every case, it will offer more detailed information about the book than an Amazon site or other book retailers.

Rev. Sirico on Fox's Neil Cavuto

Acton's President, Rev. Robert Sirico, appeared on "Your World with Neil Cavuto" on February 3 to

ACTON News



Dr. Samuel Gregg

promotion of different values and their institutional expressions explains much of the economic dysfunctionality of much of today's Europe. He also underscores where similar trends are making themselves manifest in twenty-first century America. According to Gregg, Europe is the canary in the coal mine for America. Though American economic culture continues to differ markedly from what exists in Europe, Gregg argues that America is fast reaching the point where it needs to make some fundamental choices at the level of values if it wishes to remain the world's most dynamic and prosperous economy. The wrong choices, he insists, could easily lead to economic Europeanization –



Rev. Robert Sirico

discuss the president quoting scripture in his call for higher tax rates. The president quoted Luke's Gospel passage "For unto whom much is given much is required." Rev. Sirico called the president's proof texting bad biblical theology and bad tax policy. You can watch his entire appearance on the Acton Web Site at <http://blog.acton.org/archives/29163-video-sirico-on-the-presidential-proof-texting.html>.

The Acton Institute has also raised its profile in the media because of threats to religious liberty through health care mandates imposed on religious organizations by the White House.

John Blundell Delivers Acton Lecture on Thatcher

On October 6, John Blundell delivered a lecture in Grand Rapids on the subject of Margaret Thatcher and her economic reforms in the United Kingdom. Mr. Blundell is the author of *Margaret Thatcher: A Portrait of the Iron Lady*. He currently serves as distinguished senior fellow at the Institute of Economic Affairs, where he was director general from 1993 - 2009.

Margaret Thatcher served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1979 - 1990. Mr. Blundell quoted notable British journalist Charles Moore who recently declared, "With all due respect to the Queen, Thatcher is the greatest living English Woman." The BBC recently ranked Thatcher the 16th greatest figure in all of British history.

Touching on just a portion of her legacy, Mr. Blundell highlighted the fact that Thatcher,

"Transformed the nation's view of the benefits of a market economy. She took the whole union movement, brought it back under the rule of law and gave it back to its members. She privatized the commanding heights of the economy, thus transforming their fortunes and

starting a worldwide movement. She made Brits walk tall again with a principled, firm and robust approach to foreign relations.

Mr. Blundell also noted that Thatcher would be very concerned about the centralization of health care in the United States. "She would be more concerned about that than the financial crisis," added Mr. Blundell. He stated that Thatcher knew even she could not dismantle that system in Europe and that once it is implemented and institutionalized in the bureaucracy, it is almost impossible to decentralize.

On October 20 of last year, Thatcher was honored with the 2011 Faith & Freedom Award at Acton's Annual Dinner in Grand Rapids. Acton's *Religion & Liberty* publication interviewed Thatcher in 1992.

The Acton Lecture Series began in 1991 as a service to the local community. Acton seeks to bring knowledgeable and thought-provoking speakers to the area, providing our local audience in Grand Rapids, MI, the opportunity to interact with prominent thinkers on issues of faith and freedom.



Thatcher awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.



ACTON in the News

"Is Jesus talking about the tax capability of the government to acquire from people? I think not!"

—Excerpted from Rev. Robert Sirico's appearance on *Fox News*.

Rev. Robert Sirico

Title: Rev. Robert Sirico on Presidential Prooftexting
Program: *Fox News with Neil Cavuto*
Air Date: 02.03.12

Dr. Samuel Gregg

Title: Europe in Demographic Denial
Publisher: *The American Spectator*
Date: 01.20.12

Dr. Samuel Gregg

Title: The Problem with Compassionate Conservatism
Publisher: *National Review Online*
Date: 01.09.12

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.

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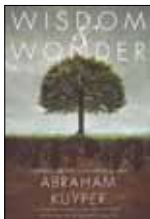
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Wisdom and Wonder

By Abraham Kuyper

Wisdom & Wonder: Common Grace in Science & Art is a new and complete translation of two sections that the Dutch Reformed theologian and politician Abraham Kuyper intended for his larger three-volume work on common grace.

Softcover 182 pages Original Price \$16.99 Sale \$14.99

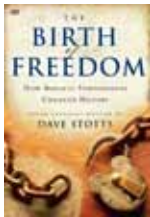


Fair Trade? Its Prospects as a Poverty Solution

By Victor V. Claar

Fair Trade is an enormously popular idea in Christian and secular circles alike. Who, after all, could be against fairness? Victor V. Claar, however, raises significant economic and moral questions about both the logic and economic reasoning underlying the fair trade movement. *Ebook also available.*

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Produced by Zondervan

Based on the popular documentary *The Birth of Freedom*, this seven-session DVD study, designed for use with *The Birth of Freedom Participants Guide*, shows the biblical roots of the concept of freedom and debunks the notion that Christianity held back the development of Western civilization.

DVD 120 mins Original Price \$25.00 Sale \$20.00



Birth of Freedom DVD and Study Guide

produced by Acton Media

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Birth of Freedom Curriculum DVD - 7 lessons	\$20.00		
Birth of Freedom DVD and Study Guide	\$20.00		

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Calendar of Events

ACTON INSTITUTE EVENTS

Date	Event	Location
Mar 10	Faith – Family – Freedom Rev. Robert Sirico to speak	Oakbrook Terrance, IL
May 3	Chicago Luncheon with Rev. Robert Sirico	Chicago, IL
Jun 12-15	Acton University	Grand Rapids, MI

STAFF ACTIVITIES/DEADLINES

Date	Event	Location
Mar 29-31	Natural Law Symposium Dr. Samuel Gregg to speak at Princeton University	Princeton, NJ
Apr 18	Atlas Think Tank MBA Training Program Kris Mauren to instruct	Fairfax, VA
Apr 26	St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Center Dr. Samuel Gregg to speak	Boulder, CO

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