

ACTON notes

Acton Institute Newsletter

July / August 2011, Volume 21, Number 4

**Due to a printer's error, the previous Acton Notes was incorrectly identified and should have appeared as the May/June 2011 issue.*



“connecting good intentions with sound economics”

In This Issue

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- Welfare State Clergy Challenged • Metropolitan Jonah Addresses Acton University

President's Message

"I suspect that the real problem is that the faith of our age has undergone a shift from the past."

Several trillion in dollar resources were thrown at fixing the economic crisis of 2008, and yet here we are today with high unemployment, a weakened capital sector, and declining hopes for the younger generation. It seems very clear that the old ways of throwing money at a problem did not work.

One of the strangest features of this public policy is that it keeps repeating the same failures again and again. After 2008, the widespread view was that we could spend our way out of our trouble. But where does the government get its money to pursue these types of policies? It must extract them from the rest of the private sector, which is to say that the money is taken from you, me, and everyone else.

It is not a direct taking in some instances. The extraction of wealth can take the form of increased borrowing or actual money creation by the central bank. But this is not a magic solution. Both forms eventually end up exacting a serious price. More profoundly, these steps do not somehow cause economic recovery to happen. We are learning this lesson yet again—at least I hope we are.

The bigger question concerns why we keep embracing this idea that the state is capable of bringing about a solution to every problem through spending, taxing, inflating, regulating, and borrowing. Why is it that the political class cannot seem to learn from the failures of the past? Why does the public continue to go along?

I suspect that the real problem is that the faith of our age has undergone a shift from the past. It was once common for most people to acknowledge a deep faith in God and attribute to God omniscience and omnipotence and an all-powerful belief in the power of prayer. Today, this is less and less true. Those same traits are ascribed to public authority.

A new love of freedom will emerge alongside a new faith in transcendent presence. Part of the mission of the Acton Institute is to inspire just such a revival, and we thank you for supporting this.

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

Rev. Robert Sirico, President

ACTONINSTITUTE

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

Largest Acton University in 2011

On June 14-17, the Acton Institute welcomed 625 participants from 70 countries for Acton University in Grand Rapids. The number eclipses last year's attendees by exactly 200. Ninety-eight percent of attendees also declared they would recommend Acton University to a friend.

Father Gregory Jensen of the Orthodox Church in America shared these thoughts about Acton University:

There is a great need in the Orthodox Church for the laity to understand the importance of marriage, family life and their work in the market place. Far from making them second class Christians or being a distraction to a life of Christian holiness, marriage, family life and work are the arenas within which the laity fulfill their baptismal vocation. Through formal classes and informal discussions, Acton University offers participants a framework within which to address positively the role of the laity in the sanctification of the world through their fidelity to Christ.

“ . . . Acton Institute
welcomed 625 participants
from 70 countries . . . ”

The evening keynote lectures included Diet Eman, who assisted Jews from the murderous Nazi occupation in the Netherlands as a bank teller in her 20s; Metropolitan Jonah, who in 2008 was elected as the head of the Orthodox Church in America; and a business panel, which included Mrs. Betsy DeVos, chair of American Federation for Children; Meijer President Mr. Mark Murray, and Mr. John Kennedy, president and CEO of Autocam Corporation.

Many of the 2011 Acton University lectures can be downloaded for \$1.99 at the website: <http://sites.fastspring.com/acton/product/actonuniversity2011>.

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.



Acton University participants

From Our Conference Participants

The ideas of the Acton Institute have served as a framework from which I can understand the world in which I operate.

—*Christopher Tsai*
Cambridge, Massachusetts

We did enjoy and learn a lot from that wonderful experience. We have no words to express our gratitude to you for all your attentions, kindness, love, and hard work that was evident in the event.

—*Jorge Smith*
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

2011 Interns Widely Published

Acton summer interns have used their skills, education, and experience to contribute timely content to the PowerBlog and Acton commentaries. “We had a lot of interns who have a passion for writing and because they understood the Acton principles, they were able to step in and contribute immediately,” said associate editor Ray Nothstine. Matthea Brandenburg, Nathan Rolf, John Meszaros, Tony Oleck, Kenneth Spence, Elise Amyx, and Kailyn Baum all helped to strengthen Acton’s web presence with timely material and commentary.

During his time at Acton, Tony Oleck published a piece on liturgy in *Crisis Magazine*. Elise Amyx published a commentary on agricultural subsidies in the *Detroit News* and published letters to the editor in *The Washington Examiner*. “Acton’s gloves-off, no-holds-barred approach to economics and public life has been a refreshing change from the usual Washington way of operating,” said Kenneth Spence. Spence provided timely analysis of budget issues, the religious left, foreign aid, and agricultural issues, to name a few.

Welfare State Clergy Challenged

The Acton Institute has been instrumental in the push back against clergy protesting possible federal budget cuts earmarked for social programs. The clergy standing against reform of the country’s welfare and poverty policies are led by Sojourners President and CEO Jim Wallis. Wallis and others have signed on to a “Circle of Protection” that pledges commitment “to resist budget cuts that undermine the lives, dignity, and rights of poor and vulnerable people.”

One way the Acton Institute has been leading the charge on challenging some religious leaders that want an ever expanding welfare state is responding with timely content in print, on the Acton PowerBlog and with media appearances. In a commentary on the topic, Acton’s director of communications, John Couretas, offered these words:

Not only does the Circle of Protection group appear to be oblivious to the power of private charity and church-based outreach to the needy, but they seem to have no hope for the poor outside of bureaucratic remedies. This is

ACTON News



The Acton summer interns for 2011



“My Experience at Acton has been very positive. The team of interns is exceptional and I’ve been able to work closely with them and Acton employees on projects that I feel are meaningful and of great worth to the Institute,” declared Kailyn Baum.

Matthea Brandenburg called Acton University the pinnacle of her internship:

Acton University has been the highlight of my time at Acton thus far. It was great to see 600 or more people that wanted to join in this search for truth and were eager to analyze the topics discussed.

a view of the human person not as a composite of flesh and spirit, but as a case number, a statistic and a passive victim of the daily challenges and troubles that life brings.

Also, responding to the Circle of Protection and advancing an alternative plan for reform is Christians for a Sustainable Economy (CASE). Readers can check out their website at Case4America.org.

On July 28, a group of religious left officials were arrested in the Capitol Rotunda in an act of protest over supposed cuts. They also staged the sit-in to pray for policies that would raise taxes.

Metropolitan Jonah Addresses Acton University

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah addressed over 600 Acton University attendees on “Asceticism and the Consumer Society” on June 16 in Grand Rapids. In November of 2008, Metropolitan Jonah was elected Archbishop of Washington and New York and Metropolitan of All America and Canada at the 15th All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America, in Pittsburgh, PA.

Metropolitan Jonah spoke about the human condition:

Thus the tragic paradox of the fall, the great tragedy of human sinfulness is this: the gifts of God have become distorted. Rather than drawing us closer to Him and to each other, we misuse the good things of God to our own harm, spiritually, morally, psychologically, socially and physically.

The Orthodox bishop stressed the centrality of repentance so that man has a proper “stewardship of the material world, and its proper use to glorify God.” He called on believers of the Gospel to not compartmentalize their spiritual life from all of

culture and to overcome secularization. “The fruit of secularism is despair,” declared Jonah.

On the world, Metropolitan Jonah said “it shimmers with God’s creation.” He received a rousing and prolonged standing ovation for his remarks.

You can read Metropolitan’s prepared address in its entirety on the Acton website at www.acton.org/global/article/asceticism-consumer-society.

Next year, Acton University is scheduled for June 12-15 in downtown Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Networking is a valuable benefit of Acton University and participants can interact with people from diverse backgrounds who share a concern about issues at the heart of faith and freedom. This year at Acton University, the number of faculty exceeded 40 individuals. If you have questions about Acton University, you can contact Acton’s education initiatives manager at keagle@acton.org. The website for Acton University can be found at <http://au.acton.org/>.



Metropolitan Jonah speaking at this years Acton University.



ACTON in the News

“The Circle of Protection, led by Jim Wallis and his George Soros-funded Sojourners group, is advancing a false narrative...”

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

Dr. Samuel Gregg

Title: Rome vs. Beijing: China’s Catch-22
Publisher: *The American Spectator*
Date: 7.29.11

Rev. Robert Sirico

Title: The Church as the Bride of Caesar
Publisher: *National Review Online*
Date: 7.27.11

Rev. Robert Sirico

Title: Rev. Sirico on Helping the Poor
Program: *The Matt Friedman Show*
Air Date: 7.5.11

Reminder

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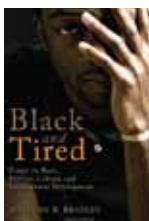


Politics - According to the Bible

By Wayne Grudem

Politics-According to the Bible is a readable, comprehensive political philosophy, arguing for Christian involvement based on biblical teachings and a Christian worldview. This sweeping resource is a must-read for today's Christians.

Hardcover 624 pages Original Price \$32.00 Sale \$29.00



Black and Tired: Essays on Race, Politics, Culture, and International Development

By Dr. Anthony Bradley

This book will be a breath of fresh air in terms of economics and public policy but is unique because it also explicitly applies Christian moral teachings to today's global concerns.

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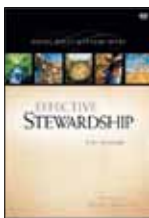


Faith, Freedom, and Modernity

By Jan Klos

Beginning with a careful study of 19th century liberalism, Klos illustrates how free societies are unable to maintain themselves without the underpinning of a vigorous cultural commitment to a Christian understanding of man and the morality which flows from it.

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Calendar of Events

ACTON INSTITUTE EVENTS

Date	Event	Location
Sep 15	Luncheon Lecture with Rev. Robert Sirico	Pittsburgh, PA
Oct 5	Acton Lecture Series with Dr. John Blundell	Grand Rapids, MI
Oct 20	Acton Annual Dinner	Grand Rapids, MI
Oct 27	Luncheon Lecture with Rev. Robert Sirico	Houston, TX
Oct 27-28	Markets, Government, and the Common Good Hillsdale College/CCCU/Acton's Kris Mauren as panel moderator	Atlanta, GA

STAFF ACTIVITIES/DEADLINES

Date	Event	Location
Sep 14-18	Liberty Fund Scholars Colloquium Samuel Gregg to be Discussion Leader	Berlin, Germany
Sep 30- Oct 3	Mont Pelerin Society Special Meeting Samuel Gregg to Speak	Istanbul, Turkey

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