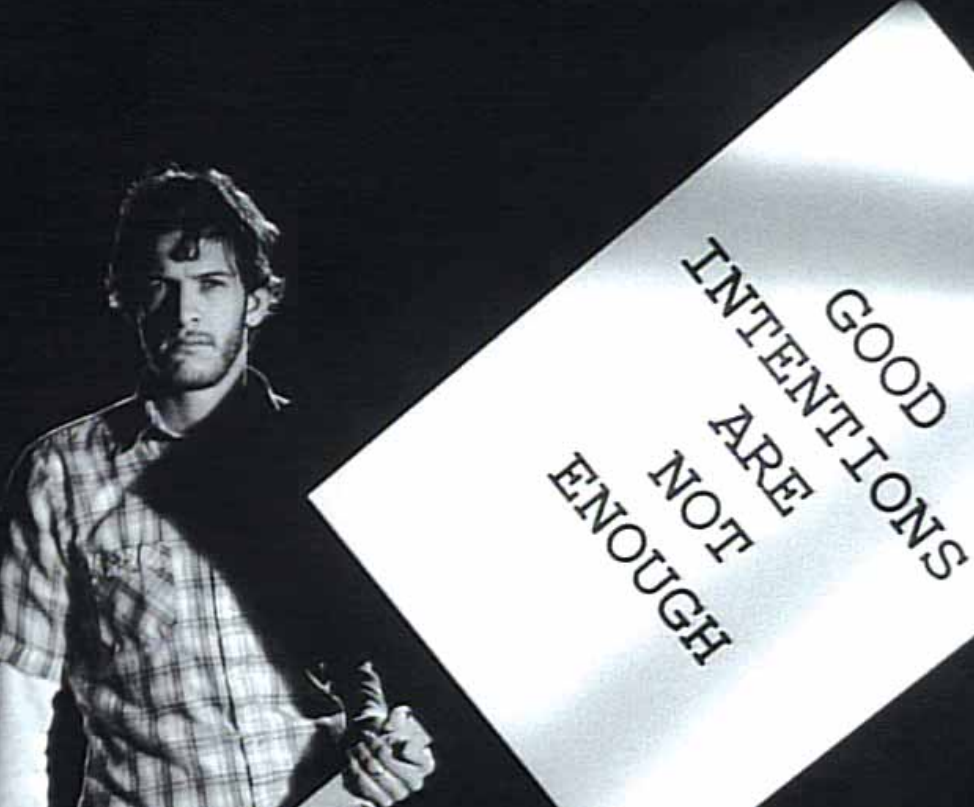


ACTON notes

The Newsletter
of the
Acton Institute
March 2007
Volume 18 Number 3



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Connecting good intentions with sound economics

President's Message

Dear Friends,

I recently talked with a religious leader who had a complaint.

Activists need to consider that trading with people, anywhere and everywhere, provides mutual benefit to all people.

U.S. consumers, in their insatiable desire for low-priced goods, are supporting businesses abroad that pay wages that are too low and make profitable firms that don't provide enough benefits for workers. The solution, presumably, is that we should stop buying these goods. That, he said, would be the humanitarian answer.

The second complaint: U.S. producers are propping up the prices of goods by preventing lower-priced imports from competing. This prevents small firms abroad from having access to our markets and therefore dooms foreign people to poverty. The solution, he said, is to stop the subsidies and open the borders to imports.

Such complaints are quite likely borne out of a genuine care for the dignity of workers in the developing world and the poor. One solution would be damaging, if it could be carried out, but the other would be wonderful. Can you tell which one is which?

Consider this. If we all stopped buying Walmart products because they do not pay their employees enough, then we would unintentionally harm employees, who would have to work at their next best choice instead, which would be an option inferior to Walmart. Now consider lowering subsidies so that developing nations are given the opportunity to compete with American workers. They would look to the supreme resource God has given them—themselves, not government—and creatively work toward quickly diminishing their own and others poverty. At the moment, they have legitimate cause to blame developed countries for lauding free trade, but not truly applying its principles.

The more I hear, the more I conclude that many religious leaders on the Left might have well intentioned goals, but need to understand the negative implications of their interventionist economic ideas upon the poor. Otherwise, they will end up hurting the very people we all want to help. By supporting the Acton Institute, you assist us in this crucial educational mission.

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

ACTONINSTITUTE

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

Acton Wins Atlas Freedom Award

The Atlas Economic Research Foundation announced that Acton has won first place in the 2007 Templeton Freedom Prize for Excellence in Promoting Liberty in the category of Free Market Solutions to Poverty. This recognition comes with a \$10,000 cash prize, which will be used to further Acton Media initiatives. The award marks the fourth year of the Templeton Freedom Awards, and it attracted a total of 200 applications from 53 countries, which were examined by independent judges.

Atlas staff and judges were impressed with Acton's "Don't Just Care. Think.", a project produced as a response to the One Campaign, which tends to advocate a large government role in solving extreme poverty and AIDS. The project sets forth this question: If government spends billions on problems that only get worse, cannot know the individuals it tries to help, cannot love them, who can? The solution is you. Only with your involve-

ment in private, local solutions can we ever hope to encounter human suffering and affect a real solution. You can view the Solutions project at www.acton.org/solutions.

Only with your involvement in private, local solutions, can we ever hope to encounter human suffering and affect a real solution.

On April 24, Acton and other winners will receive an award certificate at the Templeton Freedom Awards (April 24-26, 2007) at the Atlas Liberty Forum in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The reception is organized especially for the winners and Atlas donors.

In addition, Acton will be featured among other winners in a booklet that includes basic information about the organizations and a synopsis of the winning programs.

Acton thanks Atlas for this great honor, as well as Acton Media staff, and all others for making this possible. Acton is especially grateful for the faith and friendship of our donors for giving us this opportunity to serve.



Screenshots from award winning Solutions video

From Our Conference Participants

I had never before been in company so rich in scholarship and diverse in Christian tradition. It was really very nourishing and enriching. That conference has launched me into a deepening of learning about how economics and the moral law interact.

—Michael Sullivan
Ave Maria School of Law
Ann Arbor, Michigan

The lessons and friendships that I received at the conference will assist me in my further study and future career as an academic. Thank you for your very kind assistance and for having made my attendance at this thoroughly rewarding conference possible.

—Rachael Patterson
Columbia University
New York, New York

Novak Award Recipient

Andrea Schneider, recently appointed as an advisor to the office of Germany's federal chancellor, Angela Merkel, is the winner of the 2007 Novak Award and its associated \$10,000 prize.

Dr. Schneider studied economics at the Friedrich Alexander University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, Germany, where she taught and worked for the chair for economic policy in Nuremberg, Germany. Her dissertation received both the Hermann Gutmann-Foundation Award and the Wolfgang Ritter Award. She went on to work as director of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation's economic policy group.

At the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, she advised on topics like the labor market, health care, welfare reform, and the significance of human dignity in politics. She is currently an advisor on economic and political reform.

Named after distinguished American theologian and social philosopher Michael Novak, the Novak Award rewards new outstanding research by schol-

The partnership resulted in an award-winning line of print advertisements that synthesize free-market economic truths with care for the oppressed and marginalized. New ads include "Holy Pie," "Bridging the Gap," "Will a 'Living Wage' Kill Juanita's Job?" and "To Whom Would You Rather Lend?"

Download the ads now and enjoy a few lessons in economic compassion, share them with someone you know who may be "confused" about these issues, or just help spread the word! Visit www.acton.org/impact today.

Fellowships Open

Many cultures are exhibiting growing distrust and suspicion of economics, profit, limited government, rule of law, and free markets. Given this, there is a significant need to redeem these concepts by examining them in relation to theology, human dignity, and the principles of a free and virtuous society. To encourage such developments, the Acton Institute's scholarship programs support future religious and intellectual leaders who show potential in advancing understanding of this relationship. The Acton

ACTON News



Andrea Schneider



Liberty Dime



New Idea Ad

ars early in their academic careers who demonstrate outstanding intellectual merit in advancing the understanding of theology's connection to human dignity, the importance of limited government, religious liberty, and economic freedom. Details may be found at www.acton.org/programs/students.

Open Mind. Insert Idea.

Another release of new idea advertisements are being published in magazines such as *Legatus*, *Roll Call*, *Christianity Today*, *Crisis*, *World*, and *Michigan Catholic*. As part of an effort to communicate the Acton message to broad audiences, Acton teamed up with advertising consultant Grey Matter Group.

Institute offers two programs to do this:

Calihan Fellowships: Scholarships and travel grants open to seminarians and graduate students studying theology, philosophy, economics, or related fields.

Centesimus Annus Scholarships: Scholarships and Travel grants for seminarians and graduate students studying theology, philosophy, economics, or related fields. Eligible applicants must be pursuing degrees in Rome or at pontifical universities throughout the world.

Deadlines: Academic deadlines are July 3 (fall term) and October 31 (spring term). There are no travel grant deadlines; the application period is ongoing.

From Skepticism, or Faith, to Freedom?

The Heartland Institute recently published a transcript of the well received October 5, 2006, debate between University of Chicago Law School professor Richard Epstein and Acton president Fr. Robert Sirico. The evening marked Heartland's twenty-second anniversary benefit dinner in Chicago, where the organization is based. Dr. Epstein spoke from his framework as a skeptic defending the free market, and Fr. Sirico defended the same, but from the point of view of a religious believer.

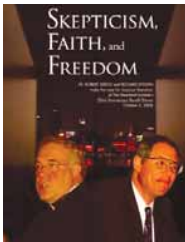
Dr. Epstein, standing behind a podium that read "Skepticism" and Fr. Sirico, standing behind a podium reading "Faith," had a remarkable exchange abounding with fascinating content.

Fr. Sirico: Let me answer at the outset the thoughts that I detect bubbling in some minds here tonight. Here I stand before you, a priest of the Roman Church. An incantation would suffice to dismiss my right to be on this platform: Galileo, Inquisition, Crusade. I do not deny these sad moments in my tradition's past. Rather, I repent of them, as John Paul the Great repented of these and other sins at the outset of the liturgical season of Lent.

But I also take into consideration that the very matter by which we may judge the errors of the actions of Christians in the past forms the core of Christian moral understanding. That is, the morality with which we denounce coercive activity that would bend, or attempt to bend, the conscience of man at the behest of some ruler, autocrat, or theocrat, is at the heart of the Judeo-Christian religion. Christian morality forms the base of that which gives us the capacity to denounce the errors of Christianity itself.

Dr. Epstein: So if you look at what's happening here, what do the property laws do? They allow religious groups to exclude. What do contract laws do? They allow them to create much denser networks of arrangements in which admission no longer depends simply on being a citizen, simply having a birthright—now it depends on there being a genuine agreement with respect to belief, so that all of you wish to come together with respect to the common religion, in which you have a part.

For your copy of *Skepticism, Faith, and Freedom*, visit www.acton.org/bookshoppe, or order with the form on the last inside page of this *Acton Notes*.



Skepticism, Faith, and Freedom



Sirico speaks at the Heartland Institute

ACTON in the News

A successful career—whether in football, law or medicine—is best built on a foundation of moral character.

—Excerpted from Anthony B. Bradley's article in *The Detroit News*

Kishore Jayabalan

Title: How Important Are The Trade Talks?

Program: *Vatican Radio*

Air Date: 2.10.2007

Dr. Samuel Gregg

Title: Chavez and Venezuela

Program: *Morning Air*

Air Date: 2.12.2007

Anthony B. Bradley

Title: Super Bowl Shows Moral Character

Trumps Race Issue

Publisher: *Detroit News*

Publication Date: 2.13.2007

Thank You

To Our Generous Supporters

A special Acton “thank you” to all who supported the Acton Institute in 2006. You have a broad vision and a generous heart, and every contribution was a great encouragement. In addition, you have filled a critical strategic role in our efforts, and have made possible our continuing mission to promote a free and virtuous society.

Remember that throughout the year, you may always donate using the envelope in the print issue of *Acton Notes*, or you may visit <https://secure.lexi.net/acton> to make a secure donation online.



AFCAAM executive director Mr. Ismael Hernandez



Guests at the Port Royal Club

Acton and You

On January 25, Steve and Suzanne Cooper, with the support of Terry and Elzbieta Stapleton, hosted an Acton event at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Tampa, Florida. Due to mechanical trouble on the plane, Fr. Sirico was unable to attend, but Acton staff and benefactors prepared a brief presentation in his absence. Our thanks go to those who helped make that possible, and to all the guests for their kindness and understanding.

On January 26, Fr. Sirico appeared as a guest speaker in Fort Myers, Florida, at the African Caribbean American Center of the Diocese of Venice (AFCAAM) appreciation luncheon. He emphasized how respect for human dignity changes lives, not government intervention, as exemplified by the work of AFCAAM in the Fort

Myers black community. Fr. Sirico followed a brilliant talk by AFCAAM executive director Mr. Ismael Hernandez, an African Caribbean Christian who has dedicated himself to this cause.

Hernandez’s father was a socialist activist in Puerto Rico, but Hernandez came to recognize the destructiveness of the economic system, how it undermines local control, family, and faith, as well as institutions such as property, rule of law, and freedom.

On January 29, Mr. Jack and Mrs. Rhodora Donahue hosted a dinner at the Port Royal Club. Guests enjoyed the trailer of “Call of the Entrepreneur” and a keynote address by Fr. Sirico.



ACTON UNIVERSITY

JUNE 12–15 SYMPOSIUM OF FAITH, ECONOMICS, LIBERTY

Grand Rapids, Michigan

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

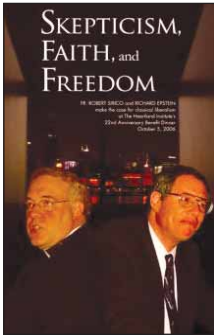
“The seminars and conferences of the Acton Institute provide the world’s foremost training in the theology and philosophy of the free-market model.”

– Michael Lee, adjunct professor of finance, Johns Hopkins University

Apply today at www.acton.org/ActonU

Travel, lodging, and registration scholarships will be offered to select students.

ACTON Book Shoppe

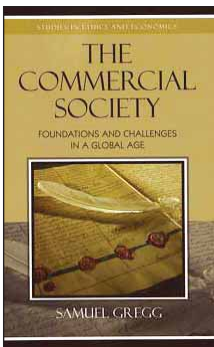


Skepticism, Faith, and Freedom

by Rev. Robert Sirico and Richard Epstein

The theme was “Skepticism, Faith, and Freedom.” The speakers were Prof. Richard Epstein and Fr. Robert Sirico. Their presentations, transcribed and very lightly edited, are presented in this booklet. The goal of the program was to showcase two different defenses of classical liberalism. Classical liberalism is the political philosophy of the Founding Fathers. It calls for maximum individual freedom, respect for private property rights, and limited government.

Paperback 37 pages Price \$6.00



The Commercial Society

by Samuel Gregg

Guided by the thoughts of Alexis de Tocqueville, Samuel Gregg’s *The Commercial Society* identifies and explores the key foundational elements that must exist within a society for commercial order to take root and flourish. Gregg studies the challenges that have consistently impeded and occasionally undermined commercial order, including the persistence of “corporatist” values and political movements seeking to equalize social conditions. This book offers a historically grounded analysis for modern audiences interested in philosophy or the history of economics.

Paperback 177 pages Price \$15.95

For our fastest service and a complete list of titles, visit www.acton.org/bookshoppe.

	PRICE	QUANTITY	TOTAL
Skepticism, Faith, and Freedom	\$6.00		
The Commercial Society	\$15.95		

Make checks payable to “Acton Institute.” For orders in the United States, Canada, and Mexico: for the first item, add US \$3.75 for shipping; plus US \$1.00 for each additional item. Overseas orders: US \$4.75 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
Mar. 7	Acton Lecture Series “Capitalism and the Common Good: The Ten Pillars of the Moral Economy” Rev. Robert A. Sirico to speak	Grand Rapids, Michigan
Mar. 14	Centesimus Annus Lecture Series Pontifical University of Santa Croce Cardinal Julián Herranz Casado and Dr. Raphaela Schmid to speak on “Religious Liberty in the Free Society”	Rome, Italy

STAFF ACTIVITIES

Date	Event	Location
Mar. 8	Centurions Program Hosted by the Wilberforce Forum/Prison Fellowship Ministries Fr. Robert Sirico and Dr. Jay Richards to speak	Landsdowne, Virginia
Mar. 19	Conference on Faith and Economics European University Institute Dr. Samuel Gregg to speak	Florence, Italy

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