

ACTON notes

Acton Institute Newsletter

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“connecting good intentions with sound economics”

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In This Issue

- Translating Kuyper's Common Grace • Thanking our Chicago Network
- R&L Interviews Wayne Grudem • Acton Institute and RefoRC

President's Message

"These callings give meaning to our life and allow us to serve God."

We hear constantly that there is tension between faith and commercial society, and there is some truth to that. The best way to confront the topic is not through abstractions but solid examples of men and women of faith who are also deeply involved in business life.

In my travels, my ministry, and in my working with the Acton Institute, I've met many thousands of such cases, from small business owners to global currency traders in large firms. In their work, they are able to be faithful men and women of God and both promote and reflect virtue in the course of serving society.

They are the risk takers who open businesses without any assurance of a profit. That means that they must be attentive listeners, and be genuinely interested in the needs of others.

What drives them? It is commonly said that business people are mainly interested in profit, and it is certainly true that profits are better than losses. Who can deny it? But is that a bad thing? Profit permits the accumulation of capital, the hiring of more workers, the investment of more resources for greater return. That means that the primary point of profit is the efficient use of resources in the service of others.

However, in my experience, the primary motivation of the entrepreneurial class informed by faith is to make a difference in the world and achieve something wonderful. This is what we all want to do. Some have different vocations than others: Some are teachers; Some are physicians; Some are craftsmen. I'm a priest. These callings give meaning to our life and allow us to serve God. So too is entrepreneurship and commercial life a calling. It is a very high calling - and has been so regarded in the Christian world since the time when Jesus made so many of his lessons revolve around commercial activity.

Men and women of faith who work in commerce need to be understood through the lens of economic understanding and rational intelligence informed by faith. This has been a main goal of all our work at the Acton Institute, which, I'm happy to report, is thriving as never before, thanks to your support.



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

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

Translating Kuyper's Common Grace

In April, the Acton Institute announced a collaboration with Kuyper College in Grand Rapids for the translation of Abraham Kuyper's *Common Grace* into English for the first time. "Dr. John Bolt, a theology professor at Calvin Theological Seminary, will serve as a theological advisor. Dr. Nelson Kloosterman of Worldview Resources International and translator of numerous Dutch works will translate the texts. *The Grand Rapids Press* interviewed Stephen Grabill, director of programs at the Acton Institute who is also serving as the general editor of the translation project.

Dr. Grabill explained the current relevancy of Kuyper's work:

In terms of the way Christians have brought their faith into the public sphere in the last 30 years, Kuyper represents a much more thoughtful and reflective way of building a constructive public theology."

He wasn't a policy wonk but an idea guy who sought to synthesize a lot of movement and

point to various economic political trends that integrated the Christian faith and did it in a way that didn't politicize the faith, which is a breath of fresh air to people today.

"He wasn't a policy wonk but an idea guy . . ."

Volume one of *Common Grace* is scheduled to appear in the fall of 2012 and will be published by Christian's Library Press.

Expounding and distributing Kuyper's holistic approach to declaring God's dominion over the world, the human person, business, and the church will be a rewarding and fruitful endeavor for Acton.

Dr. Grabill added:

I think Kuyper would say both the left and the right have polarized the gospel in ways that may have been unintentional in the beginning of the process. They need a better understanding of culture, and what Kuyper does is he provides the foundational theological and philosophical thought to understand culture in a way that's constructive and not ideological.



Abraham Kuyper



Dr. Grabill is general editor of the translation project

From Our Conference Participants

I was convinced of how entrepreneurship is an expression of human creativity in the image of God. I badly needed that theological connection.

—Kimbell Kornu
Dallas, Texas

I especially took away from the weekend a renewed sense of responsibility for my family and the community around me.

—John H. Apple
St. Louis, Missouri

Thanking our Chicago Network

Mr. Jim Healy is happy “spending the rest of his life as a missionary for the Acton Institute” as he describes it. He has taken that mission to heart and helped to build a vital network of supporters and volunteers to promote the Acton message and offer help with Acton events in Chicago.

Mr. Healy explained how he has spent a lot of time attending meetings among like-minded organizations. “We are trying to make people familiar with Acton and comfortable with its message,” he said.

The vast network of support in Chicago has grown tremendously under the leadership of Mr. Healy. “Our events in Chicago continue to grow each year thanks, in large part, to the tireless efforts of Jim Healy and our Chicago volunteers. We are so grateful for all they do for Acton,” said Elly Barnett, Acton’s director of development.

This networking effort by our supporters and volunteers here has been blessed. “Just witness the increase in attendance at our Spring and Fall

R&L Interviews Wayne Grudem

Dr. Wayne Grudem, who is the research professor of theology and biblical studies at Phoenix Seminary in Arizona, was interviewed for the Spring 2011 issue of *Religion & Liberty*. He previously taught at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School for 20 years. His new book, *Politics According to the Bible*, is an essential resource for thinking through political issues in light of Scripture (Zondervan, 2010).

Dr. Grudem, the author of many theological works, also wrote *Business for the Glory of God* (Crossway Books, 2003) which has been a valuable resource to Acton researchers and staff.

In the interview, he discussed the topic of evangelicals and politics, the economic climate, and God’s purpose for government among other topics. *R&L* managing editor Ray Nothstine commented on the importance of the interview with Dr. Grudem:

Dr. Grudem is a leading authority on Biblical and systematic theology. He is widely known

ACTON News



©iStockphoto.com/ Ellen Moran/ Chicago at Dusk
Buckingham Fountain and the Chicago skyline.



Wayne Grudem

events as one example,” Mr. Healy declared.

Mr. Healy doesn’t like to talk about himself or give himself much credit for his efforts in Chicago. He believes the growth comes from friends and the power of the Acton message. On page 6, readers will find a list of people Acton would like to thank for their commitment and help in Chicago.

among evangelicals and has written a serious and thorough book about the bible and politics and how they are connected. It is a book any Christian researcher or writer will want to have on their bookshelf. We were fortunate to discuss many issues with him and are thankful for his insights.

The issue also includes a feature story on the charitable response by Christian churches to the recent tornadoes in the American South and Midwest by Ray Nothstine.

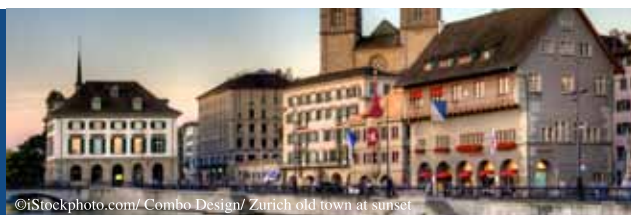
Acton Institute and RefoRC

The Acton Institute sponsored a panel on the 9th of June at the first Reformation Research Consortium (RefoRC), hosted by the Institute for Swiss Reformation Studies at the University of Zurich. The consortium is the academic section of Refo500, the international platform focusing on the contemporary relevance of the reformations of the sixteenth century. The theme of the conference was “The Myth of the Reformation,” and addressed various questions, including: Is the Reformation a ‘German event’? Did the Reformation really have such a European dimension and influence that should be celebrated today? Is it not just something that happened in the spirituality of the church? Or should the Reformation be regarded from a political or cultural perspective? How are theological reflection and the cultural consequences of the Reformation related to each other? Is ‘the catholic Reform’ of the 16th century in fact, after all, a ‘Counter-Reformation’?

In a panel on “The Reformation of Law, Politics, and Society,” the Acton Institute convened a session addressing various aspects of the 16th and 17th-century approaches to critical social questions. Todd

Rester, a doctoral candidate at Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, dealt with the interrelations between divine law, natural law, and human reason in the work of the Leiden theologian Franciscus Junius. Rester has also translated a work by Junius, “On the Observation of the Mosaic Polity,” for the newest issue of the *Journal of Markets & Morality*. Acton Institute research fellow Jordan J. Ballor read a paper exploring “The Reformational Roots of Subsidiarity,” a teaching typically associated with Roman Catholic social thought. And David Sytsma, a doctoral candidate at Princeton Theological Seminary, addressed the influential 17th-century Puritan Richard Baxter and his doctrine of natural law.

The panel was a well-received success said Ballor, who organized the panel. “This session is indicative of the kinds of productive and positive interaction the Acton Institute expects to achieve through its engagement in the Refo500 project,” he said. For more information on the Acton Institute’s partnership with Refo500, visit <http://www.acton.org/Refo500>.



©iStockphoto.com/ Combo Design/ Zurich old town at sunset

Grossmunster cathedral in Zurich.



Jordan Ballor

ACTON in the News

Urban farmers learn skills and discipline necessary to have long-term economic success.”

—Excerpted from Jordan Ballor’s article in *The Detroit News*.

Jordan Ballor

Title: Let Detroit’s farms flourish

Publisher: *The Detroit News*

Date: 4.7.11

Rev. Robert Sirico

Title: Boehner’s Catholic Critics Rush to Protect Welfare State

Publisher: *National Review Online*

Date: 3.11.11

Dr. Samuel Gregg

Title: Benedict XVI: In No One’s Shadow

Publisher: *The American Spectator*

Date: 5.6.11

We are thankful for a local team of people dedicated to promoting the Acton mission in Chicago:

Fr. Thomas A. Milota, Pastor of SS Peter & Paul Church in Naperville; Fr. Douglas Martis, Director of the Liturgical Institute at Saint Mary of the Lake seminary in Mundelein; Fr. Jim Heyd, the Pro-Life Delegate of Cardinal Frances George, (Fr. Jim is relatively new to the team, but he and I work very closely together); my boon companion; Frank P. Christiano, Commercial Real Estate Broker; John Armstrong, President of ACT3; Michael C X. Sullivan, Director of Mission Advancement, The Sanctuary of the Divine Mercy; Joseph A. Morris, President of the Fort Dearborn Group of the Lincoln Legal Foundation; Ralf Seiffe, Managing director, Liberty Markets; Donna Rook of The Institute for Truth in Accounting; Mike Tams, Lisle Township Trustee; Walter B. "Bud" Miller of Christian Prison Ministries;

Dick Rogers, President, Rogers Energy Consulting; Rey Fores, Independent Pro-Life Promotions Consultant; Richard Lorenc, President, Chicago Chapter, America's Future Foundation; John Iberle, Chairman, Midwest Region Board of Directors, Friends of the Orphans; Kevin Gallagher, Gallagher Real Estate Development; Karl J. Maurer, Financial Advisor Global Wealth Management, Merrill Lynch; Dennis Mehegan, RVP, Zacks Investment Management; R.J "Robby" Moeller, "A Voice in the Wilderness;" Brandon Myers, graduate student, Trinity International University; Steve Thomas, Benefits Consultant, Insurance Services Corporation; C. Preston Noell III, Director, Office of Public Liasion, The American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property. All friends, these team members are a blessing to me. -Jim Healy

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

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

ACTON Book Shoppe



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.

Softcover 70 pages Original Price \$7.00 Sale \$6.00



The Poor Will Be Glad

By Peter Greer & Phil Smith

This eminently practical book shows how ordinary people can help fight poverty around the world. Focusing on proven initiatives such as microfinance and employment-based solutions, the authors outline specific steps we can take in leading the charge against spiritual and physical poverty.

Hardcover 288 pages Original Price \$12.00 Sale \$10.00

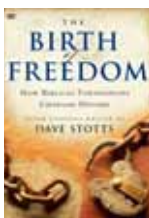


Faith, Freedom, and Modernity

By Jan Klos

Anyone who believes that democratic freedom and Christian morality are necessarily opposed to one another should find Professor Jan Klos' book of great interest. Beginning with a careful study of 19th century liberalism, Klos shows how liberalism—understood as political freedom, individualism, and progress...

Softcover 360 pages Original Price \$15.00 Sale \$12.00



Birth of Freedom Curriculum DVD - 7 lessons

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.

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The Poor Will Be Glad	\$10.00		
Faith, Freedom, and Modernity	\$12.00		
Birth of Freedom Curriculum DVD - 7 lessons	\$28.00		

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
Jul 27	Acton Lecture Series Community, Equality, and the Individual Michael Miller to Speak	Grand Rapids, MI
Sep 15	Pittsburgh Luncheon Rev. Robert Sirico to speak	Pittsburgh, PA
Nov 3	Acton Open Mic	Chicago, IL

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