

ACTON notes

Acton Institute Newsletter

May / June 2013, Volume 23, Number 3



“connecting good intentions with sound economics”

In This Issue

- Acton University: 85 Countries Represented, 100 Lectures
- Profile of an AU Attendee: Adam Vallus
- Profile of an AU Attendee: Allan Mendell
- Samuel Gregg Publishes New Book: *Tea Party Catholic*

President's Message

We have just finished another Acton University, and I want to thank all who participated. It is always edifying to meet so many people from so many walks of life who are deeply interested in promoting human dignity and human flourishing.

“It is a powerful thing to ask of God and of ourselves.”

For years at Acton University, we've been blessed to have powerful plenary speakers addressing the issues of religious liberty and forgiveness under the harshest of circumstances. Most of us cannot fathom having to deal with the likes of Nazi or communist totalitarianism, genocide, or a violent revolution happening right outside our window, but a number of plenary speakers over the years have. This year, Marina Nemat, a soft-spoken lady gave a simply eloquent talk about her imprisonment at the age of 16 under the Khomeini regime in Iran. She spoke of her arrest for requesting that her calculus teacher refrain from political rhetoric and teach the class subject. She spoke of her torture and abuse in prison - yet her message was not grim.

In fact, Marina Nemat's message is just the opposite: There is hope in freedom. We humans are capable of evil, but we are also capable of great good. Her emphatic declaration is that we are all responsible for each other, or to put it in more biblical language, we *are* our brother's keeper. Ms. Nemat also spoke clearly on the topic of forgiveness. “If I don't forgive, I'll be a prisoner forever,” she said, telling those gathered that forgiveness is the only way to true freedom.

In a time when religious liberty is tenuous for so many (here I think of Syria, Afghanistan, the Holy Land and our own United States), the message that Ms. Nemat brought to Acton University was a much-needed one.

We Christians would do well to ponder the line of the Lord's Prayer, “...forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us.” We know that we are asking God to hold us to the same measure of mercy that we are willing to grant to those who have injured us. It is a powerful thing to ask of God and of ourselves. Yet, as Ms. Nemat so superbly stated, it is the only way to true freedom for each of us. Thank you for supporting our important work.

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

ACTON INSTITUTE

98 E. Fulton Street • Grand Rapids, MI 49503 • USA • www.acton.org

Acton University: 85 Countries Represented, 100 Lectures

From June 18-21, over 900 participants from 85 different countries came together at Acton University to explore the intellectual foundations of a free society. Choosing from 100 courses led by 53 guest lecturers, the participants grappled with concepts essential to individual liberty and human flourishing.

Topics focused on theology, morality, anthropology, history, civil society, and free-market economics.

Rev. Robert Sirico, President of Acton Institute, set the theme for the conference in his opening speech, declaring, "This contemplation of our [human] nature, alternating at times between man's transcendence and baseness, is nonetheless a necessary first step to an ordered liberty suited to man's dignity."

Other keynote speakers inspired the assembly, including Marina Nemat, a political prisoner of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 and author of two books on her ordeal titled *Prisoner of Tehran* and *After Tehran: A Life Reclaimed*; William McGurn,

former chief speechwriter for President George W. Bush and current editorial page editor at the *New York Post*; and Samuel Gregg, Director of Research at

Acton University and author of the recently published *Becoming Europe: Economic Decline, Culture, and how America can Avoid A European Future*.

The PovertyCure DVD series produced by Michael Matheson Miller and James Fitzgerald Jr. was also exhibited to participants at a sample

screening, documenting the harm done to people in developing nations by foreign aid. The film powerfully illustrates how stimulating local enterprise better reinforces the dignity of the human person and constitutes a more comprehensive solution to worldwide poverty.

Acton University is open to anyone interested in deepening their understanding of the integration of sound economics, rigorous philosophy, and the Judeo-Christian faith. To download lectures from this year's event, visit university.acton.org.

"...the participants grappled with concepts essential to individual liberty and human flourishing."



Rev. Robert Sirico speaking to the AU crowd.



AU attendees from around the world.

From Our Conference Participants

I thank God for giving me the opportunity to attend Acton University conference last week. It was very refreshing, encouraging, and challenging! All the speakers were very inspiring. It is a joy and delight to see what God is doing through Acton.

—Rev. Bob Aquino
Gurnee, Illinois

I really wanted to thank you for the absolutely great job you did, for how perfectly well Acton University was organized, for how much I felt welcomed by true friends in Grand Rapids.

—Maria Claudia
Turin, Italy

Profile of an Acton University Attendee: Adam Vallus

For Detroit-area high school economics teacher, Adam Vallus, teaching is more than just testing and information regurgitation, but fostering the young adults who will soon become members of the familial, social and economic spheres/marketplaces. In order to continue to foster such a learning environment, Mr. Vallus is committed to furthering his own education as a life-long student. His mentor and University of Detroit Mercy Professor, Harry Veryser, who recognized Mr. Vallus' commitment to his students, recommended Acton University as an intellectual investment in himself and his students.

The Acton Institute's four-day conference impressed and challenged Mr. Vallus in his own understanding of free market economics and connected him to a greater community of like-minded thinkers. After his experience, Mr. Vallus hopes to continue participating as a student at Acton University in the future. Just as Acton University has equipped Mr. Vallus with knowledge, so may Lamphere High

New Hampshire, Allan yearned to defend his country and had his eyes set on being a pilot in the United States Air Force. However, Allan was soon informed that he did not qualify to become a member of the military due to a medical condition. With his aspirations of defending his country unmet, Allan met Veryser who prescribed a different means to defending his country, by pursuing his master in economics. Allan could still hear the words of his professor and mentor ringing true during our interview: "If you really want to defend liberty, become an Austrian economist."

As Allan was recommended by Veryser to attend Acton University, he discovered PovertyCure and began to learn more about the Acton Institute and its mission of "connecting good intentions with sound economics." One thing Allan hoped to achieve at Acton University was to meet other like-minded individuals his age. By the end of the week, Allan had exceeded his hopes and expectations, stating that as an attendee of events hosted by the Philadelphia Society, the Mises Institute and the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, Acton University was by far the most

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Adam Vallus chats with us about his AU experience.



Michael Miller speaking to the AU attendees.

School's economics class in Madison Heights equip students with that very knowledge.

Profile of an Acton University Attendee: Allan Mendell

Professor Harry Veryser of University of Detroit Mercy was responsible for yet another Acton University freshman attendee—Allan Mendell. However, this story begins much earlier than the opening night of Acton University. As a graduate fresh out of his bachelor of economics program at the Thomas More College of Liberal Arts in

comprehensive and best experience he has had. Allan explained that Acton University's religious aspect, its emphasis on the morality of free persons and markets and its ability to bring a young, diverse demographic was unmatched by any other organization. Allan plans on being a life-long student of Acton University in his effort to defend America's principles of ordered liberty as an economist.

ACTON UNIVERSITY

If you are interested in attending June of 2014,
you can start the registration process Nov 15 of 2013.
university.acton.org

Samuel Gregg Publishes New Book: *Tea Party Catholic*

Acton's Director of Research, Samuel Gregg, has written a new book, *Tea Party Catholic: The Catholic Case For Limited Government, A Free Economy And Human Flourishing*. The book, available on September 1, will be published by The Crossroad Publishing Company.

Tea Party Catholic draws upon Catholic social teaching, natural law theory, and the life and work of the only Catholic signer of the Declaration of Independence, Charles Carroll of Carrollton.

Archbishop of Sydney, Australia, Cardinal George Pell, had this to say about Gregg's new work, "In *Centesimus Annus*, Blessed John Paul II called for a 'society of free work, enterprise and participation.' In *Tea Party Catholic*, Samuel Gregg has put flesh on the skeleton. His work will reignite interest in the critical notion of the common good. Furthermore, it will help educate upcoming generations about the richness, diversity, and necessity of Catholic social teaching. It is a remarkably good read!"

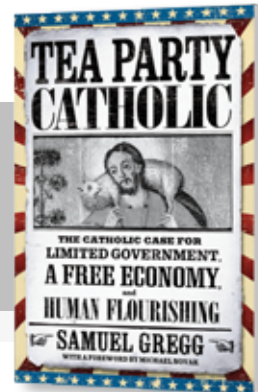
In a July 1 essay for *Intercollegiate Review*, Gregg had this to say:

"Today Charles Carroll is primarily remembered as the only Catholic to sign the Declaration of Independence. Rather fewer people know that Carroll was also a strong believer in economic freedom—and not merely because he recognized all the economic problems associated with what Adam Smith called "the mercantile system" that dominated Europe from the 1500s until the end of the 18th century. Carroll's commitment to economic liberty was also, in all likelihood, influenced by the moral teachings of his faith."

Tea Party Catholic, which follows Gregg's successful publication *Becoming Europe*, will be available through the Acton Book Shop as well as major book retailers.



Charles Carroll of Carrollton



ACTON in the News

"In that sense, the Catholic understanding of poverty reminds us that it's divine mercy rather than justice that truly saves us."

—Excerpted from Samuel Gregg's article in *Crisis Magazine*.

Samuel Gregg

Title: Two Popes, but One Faith
Publication: *National Review Online*
Date: 7.05.13

Samuel Gregg

Title: Pope Francis and the True Meaning of Poverty
Publication: *Crisis Magazine*
Date: 6.05.13

Jordan Ballor

Title: Avoiding Confusionism: Liberty and Civil Society
Publication: *Cato Unbound*
Date: 5.13.13

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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Our Great Exchange DVD and Study Guide

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As residents living and working each day in God's household, this in-depth, small group study explores why our almighty God entrusts us to be managers of—and collaborators in—his restoration project. This journey reveals the characteristics he is cultivating in and through us as we become the people he created us to be.

DVD Sale \$19.99



Becoming Europe

By Samuel Gregg

In *Becoming Europe*, Samuel Gregg examines economic culture—the values and institutions that inform our economic priorities—to explain how European economic life has drifted in the direction of what Alexis de Tocqueville called “soft despotism”, and the ways in which similar trends are manifesting themselves in the US.

Hardcover 384 pages Sale \$25.00



Faithful in All God's House

By Gerard Berghoef and Lester DeKoster

DeKoster and Berghoef define stewardship as ‘willed acts of service that, not only make and sustain the fabric of civilization and culture, but also develop the soul.’ The authors contend that ‘while the object of work is destined to perish, the soul formed by daily decision to do work carries over into eternity.’

Softcover 110 pages Sale \$8.00



PovertyCure DVD Series

Produced by Michael Matheson Miller and James Fitzgerald Jr.

Join host Michael Matheson Miller on a journey around the world to explore the foundations of human flourishing, and learn how people are moving toward partnerships and pursuing entrepreneurial solutions to poverty rooted in the creative capacity of the human person made in the image of God.

DVD Sale \$59.00

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Calendar of Events

ACTON INSTITUTE EVENTS

Date	Event	Location
Sep 18	Pittsburgh Dinner Rev. Robert Sirico Keynote Speaker	Pittsburgh, PA
Sep 19-21	Thriving Churches: Flourishing Communities Developing Economic Leadership in Urban Ministry Conference	Weehawken, NJ
Oct 3	Houston Luncheon Rev. Robert Sirico Keynote Speaker	Houston, TX
Oct 10-13	Evaluating the Idea of Social Justice	Grand Rapids, MI
Oct 24	Acton Institute's 23rd Annual Dinner	Grand Rapids, MI