

ACTON notes

Acton Institute Newsletter

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“connecting good intentions with sound economics”

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President's Message

"... I suspect that many of us will spend a moment or two reflecting on our American freedoms."

The 4th of July, like Thanksgiving, is one of those holidays that all Americans can celebrate with equal enjoyment. Neither is weighted down by gift-giving, nor does either have specific religious ties (although I would argue that both require – at the very least – a nod to our Creator).

For most of us, the 4th has elements of family and friends, food and festivities, layered over a deep and profound love for our nation. Neighborhoods will see parades of children who've decorated their bikes with red, white and blue, cities will light up the skies with fireworks as we celebrate our lives as Americans.

At some point during the revelry, I suspect that many of us will spend a moment or two reflecting on our American freedoms. We dare not ever take for granted that we can, in relative peace and safety, write and speak whatever we wish, worship (or not) where and as we please, travel wherever we wish throughout our nation without severe impediment. And we can freely disagree. The Supreme Court has recently handed down a ruling regarding the HHS mandate and the Hobby Lobby stores owned by the Green family. Some see the court's decision as a lessening of rights, whereas many of us believe the court has upheld an American freedom that says we cannot be impelled to violate our conscience.

In Scripture, Peter says, *"Be free, yet without using freedom as a pretext for evil"* (1 Pet. 2:16.) St. John Paul II says it this way: *"...when freedom is detached from objective truth it becomes impossible to establish personal rights on a firm rational basis; and the ground is laid for society to be at the mercy of the unrestrained will of individuals or the oppressive totalitarianism of public authority."* (Evangelium Vitae, 96)

The good people I work with at the Acton Institute believe that freedom – based on objective truth, which is rational and merciful – is meant to be upheld and celebrated. My hope is that all Americans will believe this as well. Thank you for your continued support of the Acton Institute and I hope you can join us this October in Grand Rapids for our 24th Annual Dinner.

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 fluid and cursive.

Rev. Robert Sirico, President

ACTON INSTITUTE

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Over 900 People Attend Acton University

Sixty-three countries were represented and over 900 people attended Acton University 2014 in Grand Rapids, Mich., from June 17-20. On his blog, Fr. John Zuhlsdorf commented on the cross cultural representation of the four-day conference, "I am always amazed by the diversity of the participants. The other day I was reading some bitter silliness about Acton University and how tribal and polarized it is. I was by a young Protestant pastor, black, with an earring and a Mohawk."

The assembled attended over 100 courses touching on everything from theology, history, policy, and economics. Gordon College economics professor Stephen Smith noted, "Acton is very good at moving from economic insight, marrying it and filtering it through Christian teaching."

Evening speakers this year included Rev. Robert Sirico, Andy Crouch of *Christianity Today*, artist Makoto Fujimura, and *The New York Times* columnist, Ross Douthat. An art exhibit at the Acton head-

quarters titled "Walking on Water" by Fujimura will be featured at the ArtPrize 2014 festival in Grand Rapids this fall. Judge Andrew Napolitano, a judicial analyst for Fox News, also spoke at a lunch session and taught a course titled "Freedom of Conscience and the Constitution." Fr. Hans Jacobse, a faculty member at Acton University and founder of the American Orthodox Institute said of Acton University:

"You will come out stronger than you were going in."

If you're looking for something that will make your work in the world more certain and secure, you really need to go to these lectures. You will come out stronger than you were going in.

Acton University is a four-day exploration of the intellectual foundations of a free society. It is an opportunity to deepen your knowledge on philosophy, theology and sound economics.

If you missed Acton University this year, you can go online and download lectures for a small fee at <http://sites.fastspring.com/acton/product/actonuniversity2014>.



Acton University attendees.



Fr. Hans Jacobse speaking at AU 2014.

From Our Conference Participants

I have indeed learned a lot. Thanks for your support and scholarship without which it would not have been possible for me to attend such a great event.

—Fr. Savari Raj Augustine
Delhi, India

Acton University truly changed my life and further narrowed the direction of where I am going in my life and calling.

—Simone Rizkallah
Fairfax, Virginia

Profile of an AU Attendee: Gregory Schmidt

Traveling south from Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, Gregory Schmidt returned to Grand Rapids for his second Acton University in June. Having just finished his medical degree from the University of Manitoba, Schmidt is most thankful for the opportunity to rehear Acton's message. It may be the "same message, but the words are different and the way it resonates with you at that particular time, that year, that date, I think is different every time." Having had more time to digest all he learned, he found the message to be more powerful the second time.

He first learned of Acton University through an ad on the Poverty Cure Facebook page. After being greatly intrigued by the course list, he knew he had to come. This is ultimately what also motivated him to return for a second year, wanting to reconnect with the speakers he had heard before, and to meet those he had yet to hear.

Most thankful for the effect Acton has had on his

Profile of an AU Attendee: Father Dominic Ndugwa

Traveling from Uganda for his second Acton University, Fr. Dominic Ndugwa is grateful for the effect his attendance has had on his priestly ministry. Currently finishing his final year of canon law school at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome, Fr. Ndugwa believes the message of Acton lines up nicely with his study of canon law.

"After all, the goal or aim of law is justice and the salvation of souls, my soul and the soul of others," he said. At Acton University he has learned simple ways to direct the possession of temporal goods towards justice. After his first time attending Acton University, Fr. Ndugwa had no question whether he would return to Acton, eventually returning in 2014 as both alumni, as well as a *Dignitatis Humanae* Fellow. He knew the value of his participation as soon as he began sharing all he had learned with his brother priests in Uganda. He observed a change in their own mindsets and had found that they were listening wholeheartedly. The principles and ideals

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Over 900 people attended AU 2014.



Father Dominic Ndugwa

world view, particularly the diversity of thought which it brings together each year, Schmidt knows that what he has learned affects how he lives every day. Noting that everyone must approach their own particular jobs each day with their own world view, he believes that "being able to come at that with both a strong intellectual foundation and a stronger spiritual foundation is really crucial."

For him, Acton has provided a place to explore a cohesive world view and apply it to all avenues of life, enabling him to better transform the people he meets, his family and friends, and his community.

he had learned at Acton University were being put into practice not only by him, but also by the people who had been told of his experience.

Fr. Ndugwa's most compelling reason to return was the attitude he witnessed at Acton. "Everyone is giving the best of themselves, and all of themselves." In his dialogue with others, Fr. Ndugwa found Acton to be the best place to find intellectual harmony, within a spirit of ecumenism. "This is a good use of my time," he said. Fr. Ndugwa plans to keep dedicating his life to the promotion of a free and virtuous society, teaching both his fellow priests and his congregation.

Why I Chose Planned Giving and Non-Profits

A few years after getting married in 1987, my husband, Sandy Harper, began serving as stewardship chairman at our church. During this time, he began to see how ill-informed some people were about finances, and especially how confused clergy were about free markets. We weren't experts either—we muddled through caring for our four children, saving for college, paying bills, and giving to church and charities. Perhaps because of this, Sandy and I became interested in the work of the Acton Institute. At this same time, with a good deal of planning and a little bit of luck from the market, Sandy also made some very wise investments. We decided we needed to create a plan to achieve three main goals: 1) Hold onto what we had and create a lifetime income; 2) Diversify our investments; and 3) Give to others.

In early 2000, Sandy read a small article about charitable trusts in the *Wall Street Journal*. After discussing the article with our financial advisor, Sandy and I agreed that a charitable remainder trust would be a good way for us to satisfy our goals: diversify some of our volatile dot.com investments without paying capital gains; receive a monthly lifetime

income; and preserve the principle for charities and non-profits of our choice (including Acton).

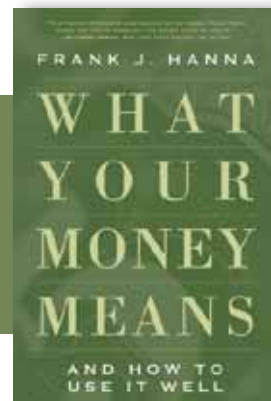
We felt blessed to be able to give in this way. A few years later, we received noted philanthropist (and Acton Board Member) Frank Hanna's book, *What Your Money Means: And How to Use it Well*, which illustrates our perspective on wealth and charitable giving.

In 2012 Sandy passed away at the age of 75 and I was left alone to handle our finances. It was frightening to learn to balance prudent financial planning with God's charge to help those in need. It is a comfort to know that our legacy gift will support organizations like Acton, which work to promote the principles upon which our great country was founded: religious liberty, limited government, and free enterprise. It is my hope that this gift will help Acton continue to fill the educational gap in religious, business, and academic spheres so that our society will flourish after we are gone.

Sherry Harper lives in Tuscon, AZ., and authored this piece.



The Harper family



ACTON in the News

“Once you grant liberty in one area, it’s hard to preclude freedom from spreading to other spheres.”

—Excerpted from Samuel Gregg’s article in *The American Spectator*.

Rev. Robert Sirico

Title: Pope Francis Comments on Income Inequality
Program: *Your World with Neil Cavuto*
Air Date: 5.16.14

Samuel Gregg

Title: Religious Freedom and Economic Liberty: Truly Indivisible
Publisher: *The American Spectator*
Date: 5.08.14

Rev. Robert Sirico

Title: Supreme Court Ruling on Prayer
Program: *The Jim Bohannon Show*
Air Date: 5.05.14

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.

INTRODUCE ACTON TO A FRIEND

KNOW SOMEONE WHO WOULD BE INTERESTED IN THE WORK OF THE ACTON INSTITUTE? USE OUR WEBSITE TO SEND THEM AN E-MAIL WITH INFORMATION ON OUR PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES. THANKS FOR PROMOTING FREEDOM AND VIRTUE!

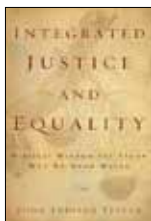
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ACTON Book Shop



Integrated Justice

By John Teevan

Why write about social justice? Why investigate income inequality? This book discusses the topics of social justice and income inequality within an economic, philosophical, and biblical framework that leads to an understanding of integrated justice.

Softcover 177 pages Sale \$14.95



Acton University Pocket Drive: 2010-2013 Lecture Bundle

By Acton Institute

Own all of the lectures from Acton University on a USB flash drive with this inexpensive bundle. Valued at \$179, these lectures were recorded at Acton University sessions from 2010 to 2013. The flash drive comes with lectures organized by year and each includes the lecturer and course title in the file name.

181 Lectures Sale \$29.95

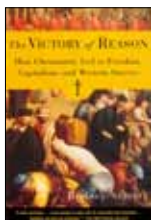


Essays in Religion, Politics, and Morality

By Lord Acton

Contents include: Section I - Essays in Liberal Catholicism; Section II - Acton and the Vatican Council; Section III - Perspectives on History, Religion, and Morality; Section IV - Selections from the Acton Legacy.

Hardcover 716 pages Sale \$15.00



The Victory Of Reason

By Rodney Stark

In *The Victory of Reason*, Rodney Stark advances a revolutionary, controversial, and long overdue idea: that Christianity and its related institutions are, in fact, directly responsible for the most significant intellectual, political, scientific, and economic breakthroughs of the past millennium.

Softcover 304 pages Sale \$12.00

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	PRICE	QUANTITY	TOTAL
Integrated Justice	\$14.95		
Acton University Pocket Drive: 2010-2013 Lecture Bundle	\$29.95		
Essays in Religion, Politics, and Morality	\$15.00		
The Victory of Reason	\$12.00		

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Calendar of Events

ACTON INSTITUTE EVENTS

Date	Event	Location
Sep 11	Pittsburgh Luncheon Keynote Speaker: Rev. Robert Sirico	Pittsburgh, PA
Sep 18	Thriving Churches: Flourishing Communities Developing Economic Leadership in Urban Ministry	Weehawken, NJ
Sep 25	Liberty, Solidarity and Crony Capitalism Sam Gregg to Speak	Washington, D.C.
Oct 9	Acton Annual Dinner Keynote Speaker: Daniel Hannan, Author & Member European Parliament	Grand Rapids, MI
Oct 30	Houston Luncheon Keynote Speaker: Rev. Robert Sirico	Houston, TX
Nov 10	Second Dignitatis Humane Conference Religious Liberty, the Church, and Civil Society in an Age of Growing Government	Washington, D.C.