Acton notes

Acton Institute Newsletter
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"connecting good intentions with sound economics"

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President's Message

"It is easy to become overwhelmed with 'busyness' during the holidays."

It is always a pleasure to walk into the Acton Building, but more so in December. There is a holiday gleam about the place: the crèche is prominently displayed, the lights on the tree shine, and silver and gold glisten throughout the halls. In the kitchen, one can usually find some goodies to be shared.

While the good folks at Acton enjoy a bit of "down time" during this time of year, we still remain busy. We are looking forward to the imminent publication of two new monographs, one on human trafficking and one on consumerism. Our events calendar for 2015 is beginning to fill with lectures from scholars such as Arthur Brooks and George Weigel. Although Acton University is months away, we are already registering people, setting agendas, and planning courses.

It is easy to become overwhelmed with "busyness" during the holidays. Apparently, this was the case in 1816 as well. That is when a young Irishman by the name of James Montgomery wrote the lovely hymn, *Angels from the Realms of Glory*. One of the verses reads:

> *Sages, leave your contemplations,*
> *Brighter visions beam afar;*
> *Seek the great Desire of Nations;*
> *Ye have seen his natal star.*

Montgomery was the son of Moravian Irish missionaries who died when he was a child. He loved writing and eventually became the editor of a newspaper in Sheffield, England. As an Irishman in England, he certainly knew what it was to be an outsider. The experience seemed to have sharpened his senses to oppression; he used his newspaper to write about social and moral injustice. He was an early abolitionist and left behind a legacy of hymns and poetry.

No one at the Acton Institute is writing hymns (so far as I know), but we do our best to look critically at important religious, economic, and social policy issues. Our staff works hard to bring the best information, books, critiques, speakers, and events to you; you may then educate yourself on issues you care deeply about.

That being said, I believe we should take a page from James Montgomery: *Sages, leave your contemplations*. It is good to set aside our day-to-day work, regardless of its importance, and set our hearts and minds on the great Desire of Nations. Merry Christmas and Blessed New Year.

Sincerely,

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.

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

Daniel Hannan Delivers Keynote at Acton Annual Dinner

Daniel Hannan lamented during Acton's 24th Annual Dinner that conservatives seem to only want to focus on problems, believing the past was better than the present or the future. Rather than engage in pessimism, the EU Parliament representative for South East England advised the audience to "offer something better." Hannan encouraged the audience to infuse into their arguments a "breath of warmth, a hint of optimism that the best lies ahead." He argued that, while conservatives may be famous for coming across as curmudgeonly, they fight for the best. "Is there a better system of government on the planet than the constitutional freedom evolved in the English language?" Hannan asked. Americans should not allow the state to usurp power it does not have, He quoted the famous words of Lord Acton:

> It was from America that the plain ideas that men ought to mind their own business, and that the nation is responsible to heaven for the acts of the state…burst forth like a conqueror upon the world… and the principle gained ground that a nation can never abandon its fate to an authority it cannot control.

The audience was reminded that law is "imminent in the population;" it is not given by government but rather comes directly from the governed. While conservatives may be wary about the current state of America, he said, "There is still time to turn aside. It doesn't have to be this way… Remember your past. Honor your fathers. Treasure the extraordinary inheritance that has come from your founders."

After the keynote, Rev. Robert Sirico made remarks, echoing Hannan's charge, "We can offer something better," he said, "because we have something better to offer and there is nothing better to offer than the moral vision of a free people." He discussed the great power of a free economy that unleashes human innovation and creativity as well as the ills of corporate welfare, noting that there should always be a separation between the economy and the state.

Finally, Sirico reminded the audience of the necessity of virtue in a free society, quoting Alexis de Tocqueville: "How is it possible that society should escape destruction if the moral tie is not strengthened in proportion as the political tie is relaxed?"

Daniel Hannan delivering keynote at 24th Annual Dinner.

From Our Conference Participants

As a church planter in a rapidly changing environment, I need a multi-layered framework to think through complexity and the changing anatomy of my city… The church often fails to think systemically and economically…I'm thankful for Acton to bridge the gap as I lead and Pastor.

—Brandon Addison
Franklin, Tennessee

The presentations were exceptionally prepared and presented. This caused for thorough and critical conversations that allowed members to grasp the practical application for their particular ministries...[Thriving Churches: Flourishing Communities] has kindled the necessity...

—Lee A. Edwards, II
Plano, Texas

ACTON News

New PovertyCure Projects Attracting a Broad Audience

"You made me so proud to be an African woman. Thank you for the brutal but necessary and empowering truth," said Dany Masado, a health professional from Cameroon, after watching *Poverty, Inc.,* the latest product from Acton's PovertyCure initiative. *Poverty, Inc.* - an 86-minute full-length documentary film, directed by Michael Matheson Miller, and screened at thirteen film festivals in 2014 - has already won eight awards, including: the Grand Prize at the Topanga Canyon Film Festival near Los Angeles and the top three prizes at the Anthem Film Festival in Las Vegas.

From TOMs Shoes to international adoptions, solar panels to U.S. agricultural subsidies, *Poverty, Inc.* challenges anyone interested in helping end poverty to ask: could I be part of the problem?

Philip Sansone, Executive Director of the Whole Planet Foundation said that "this documentary will be required viewing for our entire team." Additionally, Whole Foods Market and the League of Women Voters have agreed to be screening partners in select cities. It is precisely this broad appeal—transcending political ideology—that makes *Poverty, Inc.* so powerful.

PovertyCure being shown at the Austin, Texas Film Festival.

Acton and PovertyCure are seeing unprecedented opportunity to reach a global mainstream audience with this film and truly impact the global conversation on aid, poverty, and development. The film has especially energized teachers and students. The film was recently screened at Regis University in Denver and Marist High School in South Chicago. In 2015, screenings will be held at Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany; University College in Dublin, Ireland; and during the Africa Business Conference at Harvard University.

In addition to *Poverty, Inc.,* PovertyCure continues to reach broad audiences through the PovertyCure video series and additional resources. Jonathan Moody recently joined the Acton Institute to serve as Managing Director of PovertyCure in order to lead this expansion. PovertyCure now has more than 330 partners working in 144 countries and a social media following of more than 1.3 million people.

In 2014, the PovertyCure video series was streamed to 600 students at a California high school, more than 2,000 people attended screenings in Argentina, there were several student screenings at Universidad Francisco Marroquín in Guatemala, and a secret screening was held in Cuba for church and business leaders, held in hiding, because of possible government retaliation. Furthermore, the series has been implemented as a part of the curriculum at more than 100 colleges and universities.

PovertyCure will be launching some new efforts in 2015, including a publication tailored for churches and organizations sending out short/long-term missionaries and volunteers to developing countries. If you're interested in learning more, would like to introduce PovertyCure to a friend, find out more about the new missions resource for local churches, or want to organize a screening of *Poverty Inc.,* please contact info@PovertyCure.org. You can also visit www.PovertyCure.org and www.PovertyInc.org.

Juurikkala Accepts Novak Award and Speaks at Calihan

On December 4, Oskari Juurikkala was presented with the 2014 Novak Award. Named after distinguished theologian Michael Novak, this honors new outstanding scholarly research that examines the relationship between religion, economic freedom, and the free and virtuous society. Lawyer and economist Juurikkala, gave the Annual Calihan Lecture—titled 'Virtuous Poverty, Christian Liberty: A Free-Market Appreciation of Pope Francis'—after he received his award at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. He argued that Pope Francis' teachings on economic ethics are both acceptable and beneficial for economic freedom. "Freedom-friendly economists need not be afraid of the Pope," he said, "they should follow him," He acknowledged that Francis' words and his language seem to be in tension with free market principles, but argues that this isn't necessarily a bad thing: "instead of a contradiction, that can be a positive tension that helps to purify and enrich our economic thinking—just as sound economics is needed to complete the message of Francis."

Acton University Named a Finalist for 2014 Templeton Freedom Award

Acton University was recently named a finalist for the 2014 Templeton Freedom Award. In 2014, there were almost 70 applicants and eight finalists. Each year, this award honors Sir John Templeton's legacy by identifying and recognizing "the most exceptional and innovative contributions to the understanding of free enterprise, and the public policies that encourage prosperity, innovation and human fulfillment via free competition." Finalists are evaluated in the underlying values of freedom of choice, private ownership and initiative, free enterprise, efficient use of public resources, and transparent and accountable governance. On November 13, the Municipal Performance Index for Freedom and Free Enterprise, a program of The Lithuanian Free Market Institute was named the winner. Acton has long had an excellent relationship with this organization. Lithuanian Bishop and scholar, Kestutis Kevalas, a board member at the Lithuanian Free Market Institute, was the recipient of the 2010 Novak Award and is an Acton alumnus.

2014 Novak Award Winner, Oskari Juurikkala.

2014 Temple Freedom Award Finalists.

ACTON in the News

"No form of freedom – religious, civil, political or economic – is absolute, of course. But unjust infringements (intentional or otherwise) on one freedom can easily result in damage being inflicted upon other spheres of freedom."

—Excerpted from Samuel Gregg's article in *The Daily Caller.*

Rev. Robert Sirico
Title: Forming a Society Worthy of Humans
Publication: Christianity Today
Date: 11.21.14

Samuel Gregg
Title: Economic Freedom and Religious Freedom Are Mutually Reinforcing
Publication: The Daily Caller
Date: 11.26.14

Samuel Gregg
Title: Understanding Speculation
Publication: Legatus Magazine
Date: 12.01.14

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!

Visit: www.acton.org/refer

Acton Annual Dinner 2014

ACTON Book Shop

PovertyCure DVD Series

Produced by Acton Institute

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.

Six-episode DVD Series **Sale $59.99**

Democracy in America

By Alexis de Tocqueville

In 1831 Alexis de Tocqueville, a young French aristocrat and ambitious civil servant, made a nine-month journey throughout America. The result was Democracy in America, a monumental study of the life and institutions of the evolving nation.

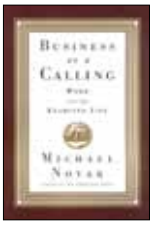
Softcover 992 pages **Sale $10.00**

Defending the Free Market: The Moral Case for a Free Economy

By Rev. Robert A. Sirico

Father Sirico argues that a free economy actually promotes charity, selflessness, and kindness, and why free-market capitalism is not only the best way to ensure individual success and national prosperity but is also the surest route to a moral and socially-just society.

Softcover 256 pages **Sale $17.45**



Business as a Calling: Work and the Examined Life

By Michael Novak

In this ground-breaking and inspiring book, Michael Novak explains the meaning of work as a vocation. Work should be more than just a job—it should be a calling. This book explains an important part of our lives in a new way, and readers will instantly recognize themselves in its pages.

Hardcover 246 pages **Sale $21.00**

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	PRICE	QUANTITY	TOTAL
PovertyCure DVD Series	$59.99		
Democracy in America	$10.00		
Defending the Free Market: The Moral Case for a Free Economy	$17.45		
Business as a Calling: Work and the Examined Life	$21.00		

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
Jan 22	**Capitalism is About Love** Jeffrey Tucker to Speak	Grand Rapids, MI
Jan 29	**A Formula for Happiness** Arthur Brooks to Speak	Grand Rapids, MI
Feb 12	**Film Screening** Contrarian: The Life of Sir John Templeton	Grand Rapids, MI
Feb 26	**The (Actual) Protestant Ethic & the Spirit of Capitalism** Gene Veith to Speak	Grand Rapids, MI
Mar 25	**Uncle Sam Can't Count** Burt Folsom to Speak	Grand Rapids, MI
Apr 9	**The Renaissance: The Power of the Gospel However Dark the Times** Os Guinness to Speak	Grand Rapids, MI