

# ACTON notes

Acton Institute Newsletter

November / December 2016, Volume 26, Number 6



*“connecting good intentions with sound economics”*

*Rev. Paul Scalia giving the keynote address at the Acton 26th Annual Dinner*

## In This Issue

- Paul Scalia headlines Acton's 26th Annual Dinner
- How are Acton alumni using their tools and experience from the institute?
- Acton Lecture Series recap

# President's Message

“Both candidates have disappointed those of us who champion limited government and free market economics.”

Sometimes the good guys win even when they don't. Recently Donald Trump was selected to serve as the next president of the United States. You may or may not be happy with this outcome. Throughout this long presidential campaign at least one thing quickly became clear: Both candidates have disappointed those of us who champion limited government and free market economics. But good people still win.

And the good are the women and men who work tirelessly each and every day year-round to promote the message that human flourishing is best nourished in an environment that Russell Kirk *vis* Edmund Burke labeled “ordered liberty.” The good include those who support us in our efforts, as well as those who endeavor incessantly in our sister free-market think tanks to promote the liberties we cherish.

For all of us in the good camp, possible temporary disappointment is understandable. However, despair is not an option. In fact, in my religious faith, succumbing to despair is considered sinful. Catholics consider such setbacks a minor *felix culpa*, a fortunate fall from which one witnesses true grace. The Buddhists as well possess a chant that loosely and clumsily translates as “the most beautiful lily grows from the deepest mud.” As for me, I agree with the proverb attributed to a variety of sources: “It's better to light a candle than curse the darkness.”

The French writer Alexis de Tocqueville predicted in the 1800s that the United States would suffer eventually from such poor choices. This year's presidential election and its results are nothing more than a pyrrhic victory wherein victors are granted only enough political rope to do themselves and their agendas permanent damage while the country once again rights itself.

Once the smoke clears and the dust settles, the good guys will still be conducting the business with which we've been engaged the past several decades. We will provide empirical evidence of the political and economic experiments that have failed in the recent past. We will remind the public at large and policymakers specifically of the wisdom inherent in the enlightened words of our constitutional forebears.

Most of all, we'll celebrate our incremental victories and suffer our defeats with dignity much as we've done in the past. We shall never surrender nor give up, because we know in our hearts, as well as our minds, precisely what we're fighting for.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Rev. Robert Sirico".

Rev. Robert Sirico, President

**ACTON**INSTITUTE

98 E. Fulton Street • Grand Rapids, MI 49503 • USA • [www.acton.org](http://www.acton.org)

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

## A celebration of Faith & Freedom

On October 27, the Acton Institute welcomed 810 people to its 26th Annual Dinner. The evening began with a rendition of “Oh Freedom!” performed by Wayburn Dean, an international recording artist. Acton executive director Kris Mauren served as the evening’s emcee. The event was held at the JW Marriot in downtown Grand Rapids with attendees representing 20 states and several foreign countries.

Guests were treated to an alumnus reflection from Cheryl Cuthbertson, the director of sustainability at Children of the Nations. Cuthbertson explained how her “mini-education” at Acton University just a few months earlier had helped empower her to improve the lives of the children she works with through her organization. They are not just objects of her charity; these children are their own solutions.

A big part of the night was a reflection on the life and work of Justice Antonin Scalia. Attendees enjoyed a brief clip of Scalia speaking at Acton’s 7th Annual Dinner and were not disappointed by both his brilliance and humor. The late Supreme Court

justice was posthumously awarded the Faith & Freedom Award. His son, Rev. Paul Scalia, accepted the award on behalf of the entire Scalia family and also gave the evening’s keynote address. Rev. Scalia reminded the audience of the importance of a “hidden virtue” that his father had always praised: piety. “It does not grab headlines,” Scalia explained, “and that’s just the point. Piety is a foundational virtue, and like foundations, it is hidden and it is simple.”

Acton’s president and cofounder, Rev. Robert Sirico, also gave remarks addressing the fear many have regarding the direction of our country. “Despair is a deadly sin,” Sirico warned. “Certainly despair is a reasonable response to the crisis we now face. But to overcome the crisis we must look into the eyes of human beings, and in doing so see men and women created in the image of God, worthy of dignity, one worthy of not being enslaved politically or otherwise.”

Wayburn Dean gave the benediction by singing a hymn. All speeches from the dinner will be available online at the Acton PowerBlog.



Rev. Paul Scalia, Rev. Sirico, and Kris Mauren at the Acton 26th Annual Dinner.



Cheryl Cuthbertson offers her reflections as an Acton alumna.

## From Our Conference Participants

[The Thriving Churches conference] is a game changer in that it changes the *why* of ministry. When the *why* of ministry is correct, the compassion to do ministry is present.

—George T.  
*Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

I was exposed to ideas and perspectives that I do not have access to in my ministry context, and that made [Thriving Churches] even more valuable than I expected it would be.

—Eric L.  
*Austin, Texas*

## How are Acton alumni using their tools and experience from the institute?

Acton's Rome office has welcomed thousands of seminarians, lay students, professors and religious leaders from all corners of the world to its international conferences, often attracting new supporters to its mission. Some of the most passionate among them have received financial support during their scholarly studies at the Vatican's pontifical universities.

Funds have supported degrees in theology, philosophy, social sciences, canon law and communications, as well as academic travel to conduct empirical research abroad, present papers at international conferences and attend Acton University in Michigan.

Roughly 270 of these "Rome fellows" from over 55 countries are now doing precisely what they had envisioned for their futures. Their contributions to promote a free and virtuous society are manifest through diverse leadership positions in the church, the academy and the public square.

While pursuing her doctorate at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, Dr. Miller served as a researcher and lecturer at the Markets, Culture and Ethics Research Centre, which allowed her to delve deeper into studies in economics and business.

She received an Acton Calihan Fellowship in 2011 while beginning her dissertation on Amartya Sen, the 1998 Nobel laureate in economics.

Miller says she was attracted to Sen's theories since his "capabilities approach views poverty not just [narrowly] through a financial framework, but more broadly as an agent-focused proposal." Sen's weakness, she says, is related to his neglect of the "human person as social" and lack of appreciation of "the principle of subsidiarity, [which] can clearly be seen and corrected in the light of Catholic moral theology."

Miller now teaches Catholic social doctrine to the 150 seminarians at Notre Dame.

"One thing I learned from my Rome professors is that Catholic social teaching is, at its core, a study of moral theology," she says in regard to what she

## ACTON News



Acton Alumna Jennifer E. Miller



"Saint Peter's Square, Vatican City" by DAVID ILIFF. License: CC-BY-SA 3.0.

All their stories have two things in common: an infectious enthusiasm for freedom, economics and dignity, as well as a profound gratitude for having studied in Rome. A perfect example of this can be found in Acton alumna Dr. Jennifer E. Miller.

Miller is an inspiring example of why Acton scholarships were established in Rome. Her current position as professor of moral theology at the Notre Dame Catholic Seminary in New Orleans is the fruit of 10 years of intense study at pontifical universities run by the Dominicans, the Jesuits and the Prelature of Opus Dei. During this time, she enthusiastically attended many of Acton's seminars and conferences.

appreciates most about studying in Rome. "It starts with theological principles about God and our nature and not [with] a specific set of public policies that may change over time."

Miller also says it is necessary for priests to be versed in political and economic affairs, but they do not have to be "absolute experts" in such fields. They must "know enough" to form the laity in Catholic social teaching.

"It is the laity—with everyday responsibilities in business, politics, law and raising Christian families—who are then called to put such teachings into practice," she says.

# A busy 2016-2017 event calendar kicks off

The 2016-2017 event series began in late September with Southwestern Baptist Seminary's John Wiley giving an Acton Lecture Series talk titled "How to Read de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*." Alexis de Tocqueville's 1835 text is a significant part of American history that should not be ignored. Tocqueville observed the American experiment as a critical outsider, and Wiley's talk explored the things we can learn today from these observations.

In mid-October, Benjamin Domenech, publisher at the *Federalist*, talked about the current political climate and the tumultuous presidential election in his lecture "The Rise of American Populism." There may be a lot of fear about the future of American politics, but "be not afraid of this populist movement," Domenech encouraged. "No matter what comes, the American idea is too strong to be undermined by one man or one movement."

Karl Zinsmeister kicked off the first "Evenings at Acton" event in early October. Zinsmeister, producer of the *Almanac of American Philanthropy*, gave a talk titled "Indispensable: How Philanthropy Fuels

American success." He argued that philanthropy is a huge part of America's culture—private solutions to public problems are some of the most uniquely American actions. Zinsmeister explained why this is crucial to a thriving society and defended private giving.

Toward the end of October, Acton held its annual "Pastor Appreciation Day." Pastors are so very crucial to a healthy community, so this informal breakfast and gathering celebrates their work. Helen Mitchell, director of the Talbot Center for Faith, Work and Economics, addressed the pastors in a talk about how pastors and believers can change the workplace, reminding the audience that "work is part of God's great plan."

Be sure to subscribe to our newsletter so you receive notices of and invitations to events in your community.

Most events are recorded, and videos of these lectures and Q&A sessions are available online. Visit [blog.acton.org](http://blog.acton.org) and search for the speaker to find them.



The busyness at Acton has only just begun! Visit [acton.org/index/events](http://acton.org/index/events) to see what's coming up.



## ACTON in the News

"Once people are no longer malnourished, plagued with disease or unable to own and develop their own property, formerly poor countries will themselves demand more cautious stewardship, and they will now actually have the wealth to do so. It will no longer be a luxury they can't afford."

—Excerpted from Dylan Pahman's article in *The Stream*.

### Dylan Pahman

Title: Pope calls climate change a sin, but that won't help the planet or the poor  
Publication: *The Stream*  
Date: 9.15.16

### Jordan Ballor

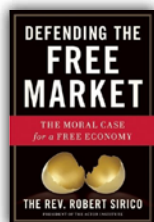
Title: Christianity, the friend of liberalism  
Publication: *The Gospel Coalition*  
Date: 10.05.16

### Samuel Gregg

Title: La vision económica de Francisco, bajo la lupa de expertos  
Publication: *La Nacion*  
Date: 10.10.16

# ACTON INSTITUTE Christmas Sale

**FREE BONUS DVD**  
of Acton's 26th Annual Dinner with any purchase  
(posthumously honoring Justice Antonin Scalia)

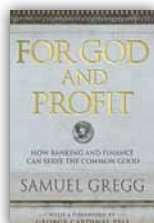


## Defending the Free Market

*By Robert A. Sirico*

Rev. Robert 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.

**Hardcover 256 pages   Original Price ~~\$24.95~~   Sale \$19.99**

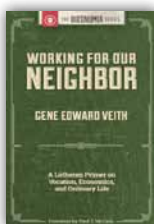


## For God and Profit

*By Samuel Gregg*

In *For God and Profit*, Gregg underscores the different ways in which Christians have helped to develop the financial and banking systems that have helped millions escape poverty for hundreds of years. He also provides a lens through which to assess the workings—and failures—of modern finance and banking.

**Hardcover 300 pages   Original Price ~~\$29.95~~   Sale \$24.99**



## Working for Your Neighbor

*By Gene Edward Veith*

In this elucidating work, Gene Edward Veith connects vocation to justification, good works and Christian freedom—defining how the Lutheran contribution to economics can transfigure ordinary life and work with the powerful presence of God.

**Softcover 140 pages   Original Price ~~\$9.95~~   Sale \$4.99**



## PovertyCure Missions Toolkit

*Produced by PovertyCure*

The PovertyCure ReThink Missions Toolkit is a dynamic and practical set of tools and resources to equip you or your team or organization to have a conversation about how to have the maximum possible impact upon those you want to serve, whether at home or abroad.

**DVD and Field Guide   Original Price ~~\$44.99~~   Sale \$29.99**



## Poverty, Inc. DVD

*Produced by Acton Institute*

The West has positioned itself as the protagonist of development, giving rise to a vast multibillion dollar poverty industry—the business of doing good has never been better. Yet the results have been mixed, in some cases even catastrophic, and world leaders are growing increasingly vocal in calling for change.

**DVD 91 minutes   Sale \$19.99**

## For the Life of the World: Leader's Edition

*Produced by Acton Institute*

*For the Life of the World* is an entertaining film series that explores the deeper meaning of salvation. Have you ever wondered, “What is my Salvation actually FOR?” Is it only about personal atonement, about getting to heaven or something that comes later? Is it just to have a “friend in Jesus”?

**DVD and Field Guide   Original Price ~~\$64.99~~   Sale \$39.99**



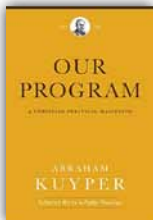


## Makers of Modern Christian Social Thought

*By Pope Leo XIII and Abraham Kuyper*

The thought of these two theologians—one an Italian scholar-pope and the other a Dutch Reformed pastor, professor and politician—provide enduring wisdom for developing and articulating a Christian witness in the modern world.

**Softcover 158 pages    Original Price \$14.95    Sale \$9.99**

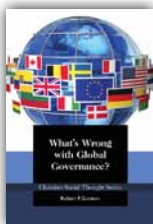


## Our Program: A Christian Political Manifesto

*By Abraham Kuyper*

Abraham Kuyper presents a Christian alternative to the secular politics of his day. At that time, the church and state were closely tied, with one usually controlling the other. But Kuyper's political framework showed how the church and state could engage with each other while remaining separate.

**Hardcover 432 pages    Original Price \$49.99    Sale \$29.99**



## What's Wrong with Global Governance?

*By Robert F. Gorman*

For many, especially among the global business and political elite, it is obvious that the path to peace and progress lies through the centralization of political power in governing bodies that are ever larger and further removed from the concerns of particular localities, nations or regions.

**Softcover 106 pages    Original Price \$8.00    Sale \$4.99**

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<a href="#">PovertyCure Missions Toolkit</a>	\$29.99		
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<a href="#">What's Wrong with Global Governance?</a>	\$4.99		

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## ACTON notes

### Calendar of Events

#### ACTON INSTITUTE EVENTS

Date	Event	Location
<b>Dec 1</b>	<b>Judicial Abdication &amp; the rise of American populism</b> Ilya Shapiro to speak	Grand Rapids, MI
<b>Dec 1</b>	<b>Reclaiming the West conference series</b> <i>The crisis of liberty in the West</i>	London, United Kingdom
<b>Dec 8</b>	<b>Just Capitalism</b> Brent Waters to speak	Grand Rapids, MI
<b>Dec 15</b>	<b>Film Screening: "A New Philosophy of Clothes"</b> Acton Lecture Series - David LaRocca to speak	Grand Rapids, MI
<b>Jan 5</b>	<b>Acton Lecture Series</b> Joseph Scoville to speak	Grand Rapids, MI
<b>Jan 19</b>	<b>Acton Lecture Series</b> Avik Roy to speak	Grand Rapids, MI