

ACTON notes

Acton Institute Newsletter

September / October 2017, Volume 27, Number 5



“connecting good intentions with sound economics”

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President's Message

Growing up on the East Coast as I did, I was exposed to great art from an early age. I have been fortunate to spend several years living in cultural areas on the West Coast as well. Additionally, my artistic horizons have been expanded into popular aesthetics considerably through my brother, Tony Sirico.

For more than the past quarter century, I have headquartered myself in Grand Rapids, Michigan, a city that I'm told was once briefly a recurring David Letterman punch line during his reign as a late-night television host. In fact, Grand Rapids is home to Michigan's second-largest population. One of the attractions the city holds for me is its dedication to art of all varieties, from musical concert venues that host pop, rock, country, classical and opera to a vibrant theater scene, museums, bookstores and libraries.

Each autumn Grand Rapids also hosts its annual ArtPrize, which is explained in detail on page five. ArtPrize has helped generate national interest in Grand Rapids as a cultural destination situated far between New York City and Los Angeles and a three-hour drive from Chicago.

Finally, what I find remarkable and incredibly admirable about ArtPrize is that more than 92 percent of its funding derives from private—not public—sources. Of that public funding, most is from local government. This artistic effort is a huge boon for the city's small businesses and economy, implemented almost entirely through private enterprise.

My objection to using public money for art derives from the core principles Kris Mauren and I used to establish the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion. While acknowledging art is important to our nation and the people whose lives and concerns it reflects, very rarely is it the case that a government bureaucrat or group of politicians can fulfill adequately the task of spiritually nourishing through art the public it ostensibly serves.

Just as a secular critic may scoff at a publicly funded Pieta, there are many more—both secular and inclined toward religious belief—who'd vociferously object to a certain installation of Andres Serrano and other works in the same sacrilegious sphere. This, however, is only an aesthetic criterion derived from my own deeply held faith.



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

“ArtPrize has helped generate national interest in Grand Rapids as a cultural destination...”

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

Radio Free Acton powers up

Exciting developments are on the horizon for the Acton Institute's podcast, Radio Free Acton. New segments and new guests will be featured in the coming weeks, some of which can already be heard on Radio Free Acton's recent editions.

Bruce Edward Walker hosts "Upstream," a cultural commentary segment. Gregory Wolfe, founder and editor of *Image* journal based in Seattle, Washington, recently appeared on the September 13th podcast as part of "Upstream" and explained the relevance and importance of expressionist painter Renée Radell. Russell Kirk, author of *The Conservative Mind*, praised Radell for her work participating in social commentary and conservative critique of political trends. Walker and guests will discuss movies, music and more in future episodes.

New segments also include "Econ quiz" and "Ask an Acton expert." On "Econ quiz," Radio Free Acton interviews an economist to tackle one

current economic problem and discuss how that problem may be understood or misunderstood by the public. For the first edition, Victor Claar, associate professor of economics at Florida Gulf Coast University, explained "price gouging" in the aftermath of natural disasters, such as hurricanes Harvey and Irma. The first edition of "Econ quiz" can be heard on the August 30th podcast.

"Walker and guests will discuss movies, music and more in future episodes."

"Ask an Acton Expert" is an upcoming podcast segment that relies on the feedback of listeners. Would you like to know more about religious liberty, free-market economics and virtuous living? We would love to hear from you. If you have any questions you would like featured and answered by Acton staff on the podcast, leave a message at 888.705.4180 or email your question to RFA@acton.org. We look forward to receiving your questions.

You can now subscribe to the Radio Free Acton podcast on iTunes or Google Play at acton.org/radio-free-acton.



Radio Free Acton is now available on iTunes or Google Play.



New segment: Paul Kengor on Reagan and Pope John Paul II

From Our Conference Participants

When I was a student in Steubenville 20 years ago, I went on a Free and Virtuous Society weekend. It had a profound impact on me and my education, and it encouraged me on my path toward my MBA and 10 years working in the political realm.

—Michael H., Steubenville, Ohio

[Acton University] nourished me by giving me the opportunity to learn about topics that are very important in my country, like religious liberty, poverty and the harm that crony capitalism causes in a society.

—Lorena P., Guatemala

Acton on Tap: Why you can be Christian and libertarian

On August 17, Jaqueline Isaacs, coauthor of *Called to Freedom: Why You Can Be Christian and Libertarian*, spoke to over 70 attendees at Acton on Tap, hosted in The Knickerbocker brewery in Grand Rapids.

Isaacs explained how she and the other authors of *Called to Freedom* were motivated to write the book after observing that many people perceived libertarians to be nonreligious or believed that ideas associated with libertarianism could not be compatible with Christianity.

She stressed that Christians should be held accountable to their faith first, as it is “more important to be a Christian than a libertarian, because being a libertarian is a subset of our worldview.” She presented the tensions commonly believed to exist between Christianity and libertarianism and tackled each.

The key to understanding how libertarianism and Christianity can be reconciled is in the message of

The next Acton on Tap will also be held at The Knickerbocker on November 16. Matt Kibbe will be speaking on the perils of political cronyism. Kibbe is the founder of FreedomWorks and a distinguished senior fellow at the Austrian Economic Center in Vienna, Austria.

For information about upcoming events or to sign up, be sure to visit acton.org and click on the event calendar. Upcoming events will be held in multiple cities throughout the United States.

Acton Institute gets perfect score from Charity Navigator

Charity Navigator, the largest and most utilized evaluator of charities, released its latest assessments over the summer and gave the Acton Institute a perfect score (100 out of 100 points in every evaluation). Charity Navigator evaluates more than 8,000 U.S. charities, and in 2017, only 58 received a perfect score. In 2016, Acton was rated as 99.97 in financial health, 100 in accountability/transparency and 99.97 overall.

ACTON News



Upcoming Acton on Tap events will be held throughout the United States.



	Financial	Accountability/Transparency	Overall
Acton Institute	100	100	100
Institute for Justice	99.40	97	97.83
Atlas Network	97.46	97	97.22
Foundation for Individual Rights in Education	94.02	97	95.26
Foundation for Economic Education	90.15	93	91.45
American Enterprise Institute	98.28	92	92.12
Institute for Humane Studies	82.67	84	83.32
The Heritage Foundation	78.53	97	84.67

the gospel. The “four-chapter gospel” is made up of creation, fall, redemption and consummation. Understanding that man is born in sin as a result of the fall is the very reason that libertarian Christians should support the resistance of tyranny. No man is perfect, and this is the very reason Christians should be “cautious” to give others authority.

Although many Christians espouse liberty, few would align themselves with a libertarian ideology. Isaacs helpfully parses the issues revolving around the dichotomy and encourages Libertarian Christians to share their faith with other Libertarians in hopes of opening up conversation.

Although Acton has long been ranked among the best charitable institutions in the United States this is the first time the organization has garnered a perfect score. Charity Navigator rates charities in the United States based on two main areas of performance: Financial Health and Accountability & Transparency.

Among conservative and pro-free market nonprofits, Acton is the only organization with a perfect score from Charity Navigator.

Charity Navigator receives no funds or support from the organizations it evaluates, ensuring that the data are unbiased.

Celebrating art at Acton

Ever since Acton moved into 98 E Fulton St., it's been a venue for Grand Rapids' biggest citywide event: ArtPrize.

Started in 2009 by local entrepreneur Rick DeVos, ArtPrize is "an open, independently organized international art competition which takes place for 19 days each fall." Both a jury and the public vote on how to award the half million dollars in different prize money (with \$200,000 to jury-awarded winner, \$200,000 to public vote winner and other prizes). Artists from any nation working in any medium are encouraged to enter. In 2016, 170 venues showed nearly 1,500 pieces. This event is estimated to attract 500,000 visitors to downtown Grand Rapids.

Acton welcomed 11 pieces to its lobby during Artprize 2017, including paintings, photographs and sculptures.

For the first time, Acton hosted interactive art. "Imagine That" by Jeff Grill featured a three-dimensional wood sculpture projecting heavenly

bodies onto the walls of a dark enclosure. The artist invited viewers to look into the enclosure, take in the scene and "imagine a name for this discovery."

Acton's lobby also hosted three other sculptures, including fish made of butterwood, ceramic rabbits, and horses made of copper, wood, jute twine, leather and metal. There were also several photographs and paintings showcasing a wide variety of media and themes. Artist Toni Johnson Mendina used quilts and colored pencils to create vegetables in "the beet goes on." "Otto and Marie," a photograph by Paul Rose captures the story of escaping Hitler's Germany and coming to America. This black-and-white photo captures German couple Otto and Marie in Detroit several decades after making the Motor City their new home.

Acton was excited to feature many local and Michigan artists, including a group from the Upper Peninsula.

For more information about all the artists shown in the Acton building, visit acton.org/artprize.



Acton welcomed 11 pieces to its lobby during Artprize 2017.



ACTON in the News

"For a better sense of how the Christian social vision can work alongside capitalism, look to the Acton Institute. The think tank remains confident in the American economic system, researching ways to restrain its worst qualities while promoting its best."

—Excerpted from the *Wall Street Journal*

Samuel Gregg

Title: Reason, Faith and the Struggle for Western Civilization
Publication: Public Discourse
Date: 08.14.17

Acton Institute

Title: The Acton Institute's Moral Capital
Publication: Wall Street Journal
Date: 08.17.17

Rev. Robert Sirico

Title: Robert Sirico on the latest Vatican news
Program: World Over with Raymond Arroyo
Airdate: 08.17.17

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 of you 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 EMAIL WITH INFORMATION ON OUR PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES. THANKS FOR PROMOTING FREEDOM AND VIRTUE!

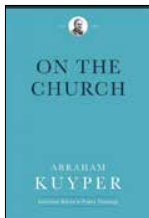
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ACTON UNIVERSITY 2017



ACTON Book Shop



On the Church

By *Abraham Kuyper*

In *On the Church*, the Acton Institute and the Abraham Kuyper Translation Society have partnered with Lexham Press to publish seven brand-new translations of Kuyper's most influential essays and speeches on the relationship between Christianity and the world.

Hardcover 495 pages Sale \$39.99

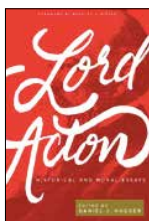


Foundations of a Free & Virtuous Society

By *Dylan Pahman*

Creative, quirky and always winsome, Dylan Pahman builds a systematic case for a positive relationship between a biblical understanding of the human person and the economic flourishing that freedom enables. His tour of scripture, philosophy and economics mirrors the Acton Institute's highly successful conferences.

Paperback 165 pages Sale \$14.95



Lord Acton: Historical and Moral Essays

Edited by *Daniel J. Hugger*

This collection of Acton's most important historical and moral essays introduces contemporary readers to his account of the emergence and impact of the idea of liberty. To understand liberty, the best place to begin is with Acton himself, the foremost historian of liberty.

Paperback 283 pages Sale \$11.95



Lord Acton: Historian and Moralist

Edited by *Samuel Gregg*

Written by some of the world's most respected authorities on Acton, these essays grapple with Acton's ideas about history, morality, politics, religion and revolution—all with an eye toward understanding that delicate and glorious ideal that impelled Acton himself, freedom.

Paperback 190 pages Sale \$14.95

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	PRICE	QUANTITY	TOTAL
On the Church	\$39.99		
Foundations of a Free & Virtuous Society	\$14.95		
Lord Acton: Historical and Moral Essays	\$11.95		
Lord Acton: Historian and Moralist	\$14.95		

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

Date	Event	Location
Oct 18	Acton's 27th Annual Dinner	Grand Rapids, MI
Oct 19	Education & Freedom Conference Jeff Sandefer to keynote	Grand Rapids, MI
Oct 24	Pastor Appreciation Breakfast Wes Hamilton to speak	Dallas, TX
Nov 8	Acton Institute's 8th Annual Open Mic Night Samuel Gregg and Ismael Hernandez to speak	Chicago, IL
Nov 9	Hope for the Inner City Luncheon Ismael Hernandez to speak	Milwaukee, WI
Nov 16	Acton on Tap: The Perils of Political Cronyism Matt Kibbe to speak	Grand Rapids, MI
Nov 29	Globalization, Justice, and the Economy Pontifical Gregorian University	Rome, Italy
Dec 6	Reclaiming the West Public Spirit and Public Virtue Conference	Washington, D.C.