

ACTON notes

Acton Institute Newsletter

September / October 2009, Volume 19, Number 8



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“Connecting good intentions with sound economics”

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President's Message

“A trend toward markets is a trend toward freedom and personal responsibility.”

For my part, I'm glad to see the old and most important debate coming to the fore of public attention: socialism vs. the market economy. It is a critical debate not because we can and will have either one or the other but because it crystallizes the issues we should be discussing.

A full-blown market economy within the framework of the rule of law represents something of a utopian ideal, but it is not one incompatible with justice, morality, and good economic thinking.

A trend toward markets is a trend toward freedom and personal responsibility; a trend toward socialism takes us away from freedom.

What's very good about the openness of today's socialists is that they are revealing a truth that has long been suppressed, namely that socialist theory is rooted not in good economics but in religious commitment. It is not a traditional religious faith but nearly its opposite.

Think of someone like Jean-Jacques Rousseau. His vision of socialist utopia includes a version of the fall from grace. He imagined a perfect world of perfect equality and happiness before the introduction of the division of labor, which came with the first building of the domestic hut. Everything we call civilization, he calls decline.

Of course he also has a vision of an earthly paradise that involves an omnipotent state and a wish for the end of dissent from his ideal state. The Christians, he believed, were a problem because their primary loyalties are to God and not society. The same would be true of anyone serious about authentic faith.

All socialists have fallen into this pattern of replacing traditional religion with a new religion of the state. And here is where I believe the intellectual battle really comes down to a theological battle. Thank you for joining the Acton Institute in engaging these issues in terms that really matter.

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. Sirico". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Robert A. Sirico, President

ACTONINSTITUTE

Acton Partners with Stewardship Council

The Acton Institute and the Stewardship Council have cemented a permanent relationship to bring the timely message of Biblical stewardship to Christians all over the world. This fall will see the release of what has to be considered one of the most formative Christian publications, Zondervan's *NIV Stewardship Bible*, which was developed from years of hard work by the Acton Institute and Stewardship Council, will be sold by some of the largest retailers in the world, and will be available at retail outlets and beyond this fall. The *NIV Stewardship Bible* is endorsed by such figures as talk radio ministry giant Dave Ramsey.

The Stewardship Council's offices will also be permanently housed at the Acton Institute offices in downtown Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Stewardship Council will work with Acton to collaborate on new resources aimed at stewardship education. Stewardship Council executive director Brett A. Elder offered his thoughts on the meaning of the partnership:

“...The *NIV Stewardship Bible* is endorsed by such figures as talk radio ministry giant Dave Ramsey.”

Recent years have seen a growing concern about the moral and economic climate of our country and the world. Stewardship is suddenly of great concern in our personal lives, our corporate dealings, and our national concerns. Effective stewardship must go beyond good intentions. It must be rooted in Biblical principles; a core commitment of both Acton and the Stewardship Council.

Together, we develop tools that encourage Christians to explore God's intended design for our stewardship, so the Christian community can lead and guide the pursuit of effective stewardship in all arenas of life.

Acton and the Stewardship Council have already produced other quality curriculum like the *Effective Stewardship* DVD curriculum. Perhaps the most positive aspect of this partnership and the curriculum and other materials that come out of it is that Acton will reach a whole new audience. Zondervan can distribute Acton's work and products in a way that would have been unimaginable before.



Acton's Stephen Grabill is General Editor of the *Stewardship Bible*

From Our Conference Participants

I find the work being done by the Acton Institute critical to the renewal and preservation of a rightly ordered American society. It truly means a great deal to me to have come into contact with people who are dedicated to moral and cultural renewal.

—Stephanie Maloney
Barrington, Rhode Island

I wish to sincerely express my thanks and appreciation to you for your generosity and for supporting Acton. I was really impressed and glad to be a part of the conference this year.

—Etido Jerome
Washington D.C.

Acton Summer Interns Shine

The 2009 summer Acton interns greatly contributed to this year's programs, publications, and events. A few of the benefits of interning at Acton are the unique experience that comes from serving at events like Acton University, and also actively participating in the educational sessions. The summer interns for 2009 represented many diverse individuals and schools from across this great nation.

The Acton Institute was very fortunate to have interns with such a deep level of talent and the ability to make an impact in not only organization and event planning, but also Acton content. "Many of the interns were able to provide extremely valuable content and analysis for the Powerblog, commentary, and other publications," said associate editor Ray Nothstine. One example was Harvard undergraduate Matt Cavedon, who provided thoughtful and thorough analysis on Pope Benedict's XVI encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*.

Michigan State student Louis Glinzak helped Acton stay on top of all the new media outreach

a letter to the editor that was published in *The Grand Rapids Press* in opposition to federal bail-out legislation. "The columnist does not seem to understand that though the stimulus package appears to be 'fixing' our economy, we will pay the consequences in the future," she said.

Boston College student Grayson Heenan did a lot of work in the area of research for the Programs and Media department.

I leave the Acton Institute with the invaluable experience of interacting with its scholars, grappling with the questions arising from the integration of theology and economics, exchanging ideas with a diverse group of interns, and renewing my understanding of civic virtue and its importance for the United States. I am very grateful for the Acton Institute and the generous support of the Clough Center of Boston College for making this possible.

Sam Needham, an intern and student at the University of Alabama, said that his experience benefited his faith as well his professional experience. Needham noted:

ACTON News



Louis Glinzak helped Acton reach followers on sites like Twitter & Facebook



efforts. Acton now has over 500 followers on the social networking and micro-blogging site Twitter and over 1,300 fans on Facebook.

In discussing her summer experience, fellow Michigan State student Casey McCorry noted:

Acton has made me eager to approach the closed minds of the world, equipped with my newfound knowledge and skills. I am eager to see the work my fellow, brilliant interns will do. What a blessing this summer has been, an opportunity to meet integrity, fortitude, and ambition at its finest.

Hillsdale student and intern Erin Cvengros penned

Not only did I learn an unmeasurable amount of information regarding the connection between business and morality, but I also grew in my faith with the help of my fellow interns and the entire Acton staff.

The full list of summer interns include Grayson Heenan, Louie Glinzak, Erin Cvengros, Sam Needham, Ian Burgler, Brad Tindall, Matt Cavedon, Casey McCorry, Matt Nolan, and Kelsey Van Overloop. The Acton Institute thanks all of them for their contributions, and we would also like to thank our supporters who help make valuable life changing opportunities like this possible.

Video Shorts Engage Viewers

The Acton Institute and Coldwater Media have partnered to produce some high quality video shorts on a number of important topics. Acton Media will harness the success of the video shorts to add increased awareness and exposure for the upcoming poverty initiative documentary. “These shorts are important to engage ideas through different mechanisms,” says Acton programs and media director Michael Miller.

The first Acton media short, “The Problem with Socialized Government Healthcare,” is about to pass the 14,000 mark for total views on video sharing site YouTube. The health care short was picked up by notable political sites such as Hotair.com.

Another short, which examines the role government played in the financial crisis, is titled “Government-Managed Capitalism: A Love Story.” The title plays off the new documentary released by Michael Moore blaming the free market for the financial crisis. Reflecting on the theme of the short, Michael Miller talked about the problem of government and bureaucratic capitalism in his piece

“Davos Capitalism: Adam Smith’s Nightmare”:

Had markets been allowed to operate freely, they would have reacted to and reflected reality; instead, government policy shielded companies and individuals from the consequences of our actions, and in so doing perpetuated an adolescent, me-first society.

A new short titled “Why Acton?” has also just been released. It examines the moral mission of the institute. Other videos soon to be released include content on the rule of law, property rights, and the zero-sum theory.

Following up on the success of *The Call of the Entrepreneur* and *The Birth of Freedom*, the next full-length documentary is about solutions to poverty. Public Television and Trinity Broadcasting will soon begin broadcasting *The Birth of Freedom* across the nation. Friends of the Acton Institute should contact your local Public Broadcasting stations to increase the likelihood of the film being shown in your area.



Michael Miller speaks on one of many Acton Video Short topics



ACTON in the News

... as Americans have started to see the details of ObamaCare, they have revolted against the plan in ever-growing numbers.

—Excerpted from Rev. Robert Sirico’s article in *The American*.

Dr. Samuel Gregg

Title: Marxism’s Last (and First) Stronghold
Publisher: *Catholic Exchange*
Date: 9.10.09

Rev. Robert Sirico

Title: Kennedy the Catholic
Publisher: *National Review Online*
Date: 8.27.09

Rev. Robert Sirico

Title: The Parched Wilderness of Socialized Medicine
Publisher: *The American*
Date: 8.22.09

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.

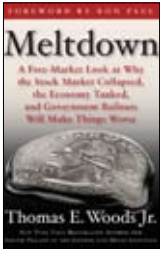
Acton and You

Radio Free Acton is back just in time for fall at the Acton Institute. A special discussion on health care kicked off the Radio Free Acton programming. Host Marc Vander Maas interviewed two experts, Dr. Donald P. Condit and Dr. Kevin Schmiesing. Dr. Condit is an orthopedic surgeon in Grand Rapids and Dr. Schmiesing is a research fellow at the Acton Institute.

The two-part health care interview discussed the importance of expanding access to the uninsured as well as problems with more government expansion and other issues related to a third-party payer system. Both guests called for reform over the current system, but warned about the path that leads to greater government involvement. "One of the major problems associated with government care is a restriction on options, which includes people with a religious conscience, like Christians. We need to make sure no matter what reform occurs going forward, that people of faith can receive or practice medicine that aligns with their faith," said Dr. Schmiesing. The two guests also called for reform that would allow for individuals and families to receive the same tax credit businesses receive. The Acton Institute has provided a significant amount of excellent health care analysis at a time when it has been especially timely. You can find more info on upcoming Radio Free Acton content by visiting our website.



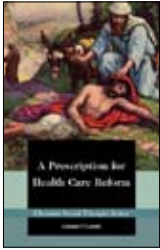
ACTON Book Shoppe



Meltdown by Thomas Woods

Foreword from Ron Paul. Meltdown is the free-market answer to the Fed-created economic crisis. As the new Obama administration inevitably calls for more regulations, Woods argues that the only way to rebuild our economy is by returning to the fundamentals of capitalism and letting the free market work.

Hardcover 194 pages Original Price \$27.00 Sale \$25.00



A Prescription for Health Care Reform by Donald P. Condit

Physician Donald Condit, skillfully applies the principles of Catholic social teaching to this vital area of concern. Neither current reliance on employer-provided insurance nor the increased socialization of medicine will lead to progress, Condit argues. Instead, he identifies the pitfalls of third-party payer systems and points the way to reform that preserves individual dignity.

Paperback 81 pages Original Price \$6.50 Sale \$6.00



The Birth of Freedom DVD and Study Guide produced by Acton Media

Humans are separated by enormous differences in talent and circumstance. Why would anyone believe that all men are created equal? That all should be free? That all deserve a voice in choosing their leaders? Why would any nation consider this a self-evident truth? How is freedom born?

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The Birth of Freedom DVD and Study Guide	\$20.00		

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Calendar of Events

ACTON INSTITUTE EVENTS

Date	Event	Location
Nov 12	Limited Government & the Rule of Law Co-sponsored by Acton Institute and Liberty Fund	Grand Rapids, MI
Dec 3	Free Enterprise, Poverty, and the Financial Crisis	Rome, Italy
Dec 10	Chicago Evening Reception & Panel Discussion	Chicago, IL

STAFF ACTIVITIES/DEADLINES

Date	Event	Location
Nov 4-6	Theology and Economics Conference Dr. Samuel Gregg to speak	Montreal, Canada
Nov 19	Legatus Dr. Samuel Gregg to speak	Chicago, IL

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