

ACTON notes

Acton Institute Newsletter

September / October 2012, Volume 22, Number 5



“connecting good intentions with sound economics”

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President's Message

"In free societies, entrepreneurs can innovate and experiment."

The slow growth of the American economy has inspired a number of new studies that speculate about the future. A study from the National Bureau of Economic Research expects less than 1 percent economic growth per year for many years ahead. That is not enough to provide a future of opportunity for generations to come.

So where does economic growth come from? Well, it certainly doesn't come from the state. Judaism and Christianity have always affirmed that the ultimate source of the created universe is a loving God, and that one of humanity's great charges – even before the Fall – is to help unfold the fullness of God's original Creative Act.

That position was directly contrary to the rather static economic world view of the pagan mind and its fundamental irrational theology. It also helps explain why Judeo-Christianity has played such an indispensable role in the West's economic development.

To be creative and entrepreneurial in the economy requires us to be free and living in societies that affirm and support such liberty and its key supports such as rule of law and a moral culture of virtue. Most of the world's great inventions that have done so much to help us fulfill the commandment to love our neighbor by assisting them to rise out of poverty came about in times of economic freedom. In free societies, people can exercise their God-given reason, creativity and liberty in ways that are either profoundly inhibited or simply forbidden in closed economies. In free societies, entrepreneurs can innovate and experiment. They can seek out investors ready to back them with capital. And they can allow the market-place to judge the economic value and price of new and improved goods and services.

This issue of economic freedom is even more important today. It is rising in some parts of the world, thereby enabling, as Acton's Michael Miller demonstrates in the PovertyCure initiative (www.povertycure.org) millions to escape poverty. Yet it is falling in America. According to the Index of Economic Freedom, America has now fallen to the 18th slot on the list. That reflects growing regulation, high taxation (especially corporate taxes), and failure to advance a free trade agenda.

The mission of the Acton Institute is to integrate sound economic thinking into the full truth about the human person that is ultimately revealed to us in Biblically-grounded faith. Your help enables us to continue with this pioneering work, and build a free and virtuous society.

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

ACTONINSTITUTE

Acton Sponsors Event on Human Flourishing at Regent

Acton Institute sponsored “To Fail or To Flourish: Does My Life and Work Really Matter?” at Regent University in Virginia Beach, Va., on October 9th. Acton focused on the topic of human flourishing involving students, faculty, staff and administration.

The event kicked off with a discussion on issues of human flourishing between the theology and business faculties facilitated by Scott Crosby of the New City Commons Foundation and Dwight Gibson, Director of Program Outreach at Acton.

Gibson states, “This event had the goal of providing intense exposure to core ideas about flourishing and economics to the students and professors. Through Acton resources, we continue to facilitate understanding and discussion in the classroom after the event is concluded.”

Dr. Corné Bekker, professor at the School of Business & Leadership, gave a lecture titled “Does the Bible

Say Anything About Flourishing?” Dr. John Mulford, director of the Center for Entrepreneurship and professor in the School of Business & Leadership, spoke on the topic “How Does My Work and Life Really Matter In the World Around Me?” Dr. Jordan Ballor, research fellow for Acton Institute gave a luncheon lecture titled “Does Economics Even Matter For Flourishing, or What Does It Mean To Be A Christian Bus Driver?”

“This event had the goal of providing intense exposure to core ideas about flourishing and economics to the students and professors.”

The event concluded with a panel discussion summarizing the day’s lectures and describing the implications for flourishing in the various disciplines. The panelists explored questions on flourishing in the arts, technology, as well as the barriers that keep people from flourishing.

Regent University is one of the nation’s leading academic centers for Christian thought and action, with a multitude of graduate and undergraduate programs available worldwide.



Acton Institute research fellow Dr. Jordan Ballor

From Our Conference Participants

The education I received at Acton was indispensable and I am so grateful for the kindness shown. Please, continue to do all you can to support Acton. It is vital that Christians stay on the cutting edge of today’s world.

—April Brown
Steubenville, Ohio

I have come to appreciate more clearly how moral and religious virtues are prerequisites to sustaining a free society and how both public and private well-being depends upon economic liberty.

—Antonio Alvarado
Caracas, Venezuela

Amway's Doug DeVos on the 'Entrepreneurial Spirit'

At an Acton Institute event on Oct. 3 in Grand Rapids, Mich., Amway President Mr. Doug DeVos delivered a talk on 'Free Enterprise and the Entrepreneurial Spirit' to an audience of 200.

"Acton is a critical organization for helping us to be good stewards and good citizens of the blessings of liberty that have been showered upon us," declared DeVos. In a talk that stressed the importance of unleashing the free market, DeVos added, "It is essential to take the entrepreneurial spirit and the ideas of free enterprise and apply them to the knowledge that is the best way to help people."

Speaking of the direction of the country, he added, "I would say in the last four years, we've been on the wrong track and we need change."

Mr. Doug DeVos oversees daily operations of Amway and shares the Office of the Chief Executive with chairman Steve Van Andel. Since 1986, Mr. DeVos has spent his career building

in response to Solzhenitsyn's Harvard Address in 1978. Novak, in responding to that address, notes that "the most serious seekers after truth come to unexpected and remarkable convergences."

Ericson taught a course at Acton University titled "The Unknown Solzhenitsyn." The title refers to the fact that half of Solzhenitsyn's writing has not been translated into English. "He more than anybody else delegitimized the Soviet experiment at home and discredited it abroad," declared Ericson. He also quoted William F. Buckley's words, "Before the end came, the fight between the Soviet leaders and Mr. and Mrs. Solzhenitsyn was an unfair fight. The Soviets never had a chance."

Dr. Ericson also delved into the disappointment of Western liberals when they found out that Solzhenitsyn "was not the liberal we would like him to be." Ericson helped to clarify and dismiss the criticisms heaped upon him by Western critics.

He reminded the audience that if they are only now initially being introduced to his writings they can start with *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. Dr. Ericson is a former national fellow at the

ACTON News



Doug DeVos speaking at an Acton Institute event on Oct. 3



Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

enthusiasm for the Amway business. His belief in its ability to foster entrepreneurs around the world is reflected in the company's record of sales growth during his time as president, since 2002, and has helped Amway grow into one of the world's most international enterprises.

Capsule of an Acton University Lecture: Solzhenitsyn

On June 13, 2012, in a lecture on Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Calvin College professor emeritus Ed Ericson cited Michael Novak's brilliant essay

Hoover Institution.

Acton University lectures can be purchased individually on the Acton website for 99 cents.

Correction

In a story in the July – August 2012 issue of Acton Notes titled "Acton Expands Urban Ministry Reach," Dr. Victor Claar's teaching post at a community college was erroneously cited. Dr. Claar is professor of economics at Henderson State University, a public liberal arts university in Arkadelphia, Ark.

PovertyCure – A Six-Part Series on DVD

PovertyCure will be launching a new, six-episode DVD series on poverty and development. Three years in the making, this high-energy, 152-minute documentary style series challenges conventional thinking and proposes a different starting point for the poverty discussion.

We often begin with a focus on “the poor” and how we can meet their needs. But PovertyCure begins instead with a vision of our brothers and sisters in the developing world in terms of their God-given creative capacity.

This shift changes everything. Instead of asking, “What causes poverty?” PovertyCure asks, “How do people in the developing world create prosperity for their families and their communities? How do we build partnerships that foster entrepreneurship and promote sustainable growth?” PovertyCure shifts the focus from aid to enterprise, from paternalism to partnership, from mere poverty alleviation to real human flourishing.

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.

Already slated for programming for universities and organizations in the U.S. and abroad, the series is perfect for schools, churches, and small groups of all shapes and sizes. For more information, visit www.povertycure.org.

Also find PovertyCure on Facebook and join the 570,000 people (and counting) rallying around these ideas. As the lead partner of the PovertyCure initiative (comprised of 180+ international partners across 100+ countries), the Acton Institute is thrilled to put forth this important program as a helpful pivot point for those interested in aligning their passion for development with their appreciation for economics, entrepreneurship, and a Christian understanding of the human person as made in God’s image with His divine creative spark.



The PovertyCure Six-Part Series on DVD for sale online at povertycure.org.



ACTON in the News

“Democracy was never meant to be a system that gave 51 percent of the citizenry free rein to progressively loot the other 49 percent.”

—Excerpted from Dr. Samuel Gregg’s article in *National Review Online*.

Rev. Robert Sirico

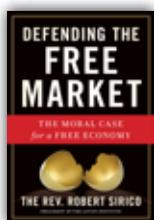
Title: Biden vs. Ryan Debate
Program: *America’s Morning News*
Air Date: 10.11.12

Dr. Samuel Gregg

Title: Mitt de Tocqueville
Publisher: *National Review Online*
Date: 9.19.12

Ray Nothstine

Title: Political Messianism
Program: *Relevant Radio’s On Call*
Air Date: 9.17.12



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

By Rev. Robert Sirico

Socialism has been discredited. The totalitarian states of the twentieth century have collapsed. And we beneficiaries of the globalized world economy are grateful that we enjoy plentiful food, clothing, shelter-and cheap electronics. But can any moral person really be for capitalism?

Hardcover 256 pages Original Price \$25.00 Sale \$22.00



A Field Guide for the Hero's Journey

By Jeff Sandefer and Rev. Robert Sirico

Do you feel like something big is missing from your life? Do you feel trapped, bored, stuck in a meaningless routine? It may be you think you're too ordinary to ever do something special. Perhaps you're afraid that if you try, you'll fail. If so, this is the book for you. Welcome to your heroic journey.

Softcover 154 pages Original Price \$10.00 Sale \$8.00

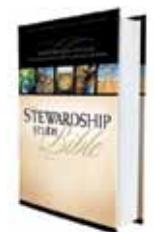


PovertyCure Curriculum

Produced by PovertyCure

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.

DVD Original Price \$59.99 Sale \$52.00



NIV Stewardship Bible

Published by Zondervan

The NIV Stewardship Study Bible uses a variety of engaging features to lead individuals through a comprehensive study of what it means to be managers entrusted with the resources of God. The Bible has been endorsed by Crown Ministries, Dave Ramsey, Good \$ense ministries, and various other programs.

Hardcover 1886 pages Original Price \$30.00 Sale \$26.00

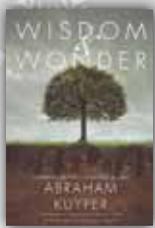


The Christian Family

By Herman Bavinck

Aptly reminding Christians that "the moral health of society depends on the health of family life," Bavinck issues an evergreen challenge to God's people: "Christians may not permit their conduct to be determined by the spirit of the age, but must focus on the requirement of God's commandment."

Softcover 168 pages Original Price \$12.00 Sale \$10.00

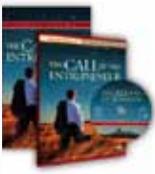


Wisdom and Wonder

By Abraham Kuyper

Wisdom & Wonder: Common Grace in Science & Art is a new and complete translation of two sections that the Dutch Reformed theologian and politician Abraham Kuyper intended for his larger three-volume work on common grace.

Softcover 182 pages Original Price \$14.99 Sale \$13.00



Call of the Entrepreneur DVD and study guide

Produced by Acton Media

Examining several core themes including the pernicious effects of zero-sum-game thinking, the role of entrepreneurs in creating new wealth, the risk-taking element of enterprise, and the role of limited government, property rights, rule of law, and free markets.

DVD/study guide Original Price \$20.00 Sale \$17.00



Birth of Freedom DVD and study guide

Produced by Acton Media

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?

DVD/study guide Original Price \$20.00 Sale \$17.00

For our fastest service and a complete list of titles, visit store.acton.org

Monday, December 10, is the last day to order from our Book Shop so that they arrive in time for Christmas! For overseas orders please order by December 5.

	PRICE	QUANTITY	TOTAL
Defending the Free Market: The Moral Case for a Free Economy	\$22.00		
A Field Guide for the Hero's Journey	\$8.00		
PovertyCure curriculum	\$52.00		
NIV Stewardship Bible	\$26.00		
The Christian Family	\$10.00		
Wisdom & Wonder	\$13.00		
Call of the Entrepreneur DVD and study guide	\$17.00		
Birth of Freedom DVD and study guide	\$17.00		

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
Nov 14	An Evening with the Acton Institute	Milwaukee, WI
Nov 15	2013 Acton University Registration Opens university.acton.org	Grand Rapids, MI
Nov 15-17	Liberty and Markets Conference: Religion and Liberty: Acton and Tocqueville	Grand Rapids, MI
Nov 29	Calihan Lecture and Novak Award Presentation: Society, Economy and Culture: Challenges for the West <i>Giovanni Patriarca Novak Award winner</i>	Rome, Italy

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