

# ACTON notes

Acton Institute Newsletter

September / October 2013, Volume 23, Number 5



*“connecting good intentions with sound economics”*

## In This Issue

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- Religious and Economic Liberty Dinner • Acton on Tap Returns • David Deavel Receives Novak Award

# President's Message

As I write, America is still debating the pros and cons of the government shut-down. For nearly three weeks, politicians in our nation's capital did little else but decry each other's faults and cast blame regarding our national debt crisis. Voters are angry that the men and women they elected aren't doing their jobs.

"Voters are angry that the men and women they elected aren't doing their jobs."

The names of those elected - Rand Paul, Barack Obama, John Boehner, Nancy Pelosi - have become familiar to us. But do you know the name Robin Emmons? She's a woman living in Charlotte, N.C. A few years ago, Ms. Emmons (while caring for her mentally-ill and homeless brother) became aware of a problem among the poor in her area: They had almost no access to fresh produce.

Most of us know the pleasure of eating fresh corn in the summer, or peeling a ripe orange in the winter, and most of us can easily buy produce. Ms. Emmons saw that many people around her could not.

So, Ms. Emmons tilled the soil in her backyard and planted seeds. It was the beginning of Sow Much Good, an organization that now has two-micro farms that sell produce, eggs and honey at reduced prices for low-income people in the Charlotte area. They also teach gardening and canning skills to others, so they can grow and preserve their own food. Sow Much Good is dedicated to being good stewards of the land and serving an underserved population.

*"A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep, and when the sun rose it was scorched, and it withered for lack of roots. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it. But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold. Whoever has ears ought to hear." – Mt. 13:3-9*

What impresses me about people like Ms. Emmons is that she recognized a problem and set out to solve it. She has not solved world hunger, erased the national debt or cured a disease. She is, however, "rich soil" for the plot of land she was given. Can we, including our elected officials, each say the same? Thank you for your continued support of the Acton Institute.

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



Sincerely,



Rev. Robert Sirico, President

**ACTON**INSTITUTE

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

# P.J. O'Rourke Delivers Keynote at Acton Annual Dinner

Noted political journalist and satirist, P.J. O'Rourke, spent much of his address at the Acton Institute Annual Dinner in Grand Rapids, Mich., heralding the contributions and thought of Lord Acton. He tied many of Lord Acton's quotes to contemporary issues in national politics today, reminding the assembled of their timelessness. O'Rourke is the best-selling author of 15 books and both *TIME* and the *Wall Street Journal* have labeled O'Rourke "the funniest writer in America." Close to 600 guests attended the 23rd Annual Dinner at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, on October 24.

Rev. Robert Sirico and Rev. Christopher Brooks, Campus Dean at Moody Theological Seminary in Detroit, Mich., also spoke at Acton's dinner. "Acton has given me a backbone by reminding me that brave souls are needed to step into the hearts of cities that have experienced the disease of dependency and the bondage of bureaucracy and the sin of low expectations," declared Rev. Brooks. He praised Acton for being committed

"Acton has given me a backbone . . ."

to great ideas that can heal cities with heavy doses of "self-government and free-markets." Rev. Brooks emphasized the importance of a vibrant faith to heal the broken cities all across America, and said "only individuals empowered by God when given the opportunity can ultimately flourish."

In his remarks, Rev. Robert Sirico reinforced to the audience the seriousness of the hour facing the prospect of liberty today. He also contrasted the impersonality of the welfare state with the relational aspect of community and Church charity. "We need to see human beings as more than the material, and take them into our care and provide for them, that is the source of authentic charity," said Rev. Sirico. He added that Mother Theresa provided one of the most devastating critiques of Marxism when she declared, "We have no right to condemn the wealthy, we do not believe in class struggle and conflict, but class encounter, where the rich save the poor and the poor save the rich."



P.J. O'Rourke delivering the Keynote at the Annual Dinner.



Rev. Robert Sirico speaking at the Annual Dinner.

## From Our Conference Participants

Thank you for making Acton University a marvelous experience. I gained everything I hoped to from participation in the conference.

—Caleb Heim  
Purcellville, Virginia

I have the fervent belief that Acton Institute as a body is God-sent. And its contents, especially its Judeo-Christian ideals that should form and influence the idea of enterprise and market-driven economies are most needed in Ghana and Africa as a whole.

—Andre De Roy  
Accra, Ghana

## Acton Co-Sponsors Sustainable Freedom Conference in Belgium

The Transatlantic Christian Council along with the Acton Institute, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Colson Center, will be hosting the inaugural “Sustainable Freedom” Conference on December 4, 2013 in Brussels, Belgium.

Featuring keynote speakers Os Guinness and Frits Bolkestein, as well as distinguished panelists and guest speakers from both Europe and the United States including Acton’s Rev. Robert A. Sirico as a panel moderator, the conference will focus on the Judeo-Christian roots of individual liberty, free markets and human rights. It will be an exciting day of networking and debate that is open to all who share a belief in human dignity and liberty.

The Judeo-Christian belief in the equal and inviolable dignity of each human being as an image-bearer of God is at the root of the common democratic values that form the basis of the transatlantic alliance. In our pluralistic societies, Judeo-Christian perspectives on public policy

## Religious and Economic Liberty Emphasized at Pittsburgh Dinner

On Sept. 18, the Acton Institute held its annual Pittsburgh dinner and lecture downtown at the Duquesne Club. Rev. Robert A. Sirico delivered the keynote lecture for the evening: “Religious Liberty and Economic Liberty: Twin Guarantees for Human Freedom.” Rev. Sirico stressed the importance of the citizenry making the important connection between the tie of economic and religious liberty.

Rev. Sirico asked the assembled, “Why is property important to religious liberty?” He made the point that, “property allows us to put ourselves into the creation of things.” In the talk, he continued to stress humanity’s relationship and attachment to the material world. “From what exists, we can transform nature,” added Rev. Sirico. Listen to the entire address at <https://soundcloud.com/actoninstitute/religious-and-economic-liberty>.

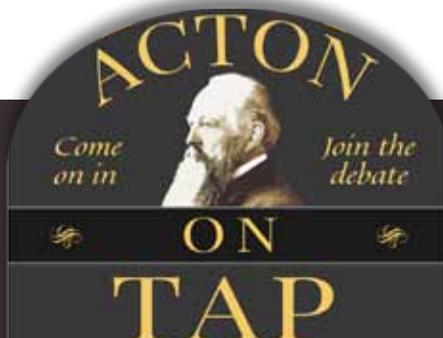
## Acton on Tap Returns

On October 8, Foundation for Economic Education

# ACTON News



The “Sustainable Freedom” Conference will be held December 4.



issues are not only legitimate, but necessary to the European and American commitment to freedom rightly understood.

This event starts at 10:00 a.m. and ends at 5:00 p.m. followed by a reception until 7:00 p.m. Conference costs, including lunch, are covered by the Transatlantic Christian Council. Participants will need to provide their own transportation and accommodations.

For more information, contact Todd Huizinga at [todduizinga@hotmail.com](mailto:todduizinga@hotmail.com) or visit [www.tccouncil.org](http://www.tccouncil.org) to register.

president Larry Reed spoke on the “Lessons our Society can Learn from Rome.” Reed spoke at the Speak EZ Lounge in downtown Grand Rapids. Reed explained to the attendees that there is truly nothing new under the sun, as Rome implemented many of the same economic policies that create many of the unintended consequences we see today. “If there is one lesson in history that repeats itself over and over, it is that no people who have lost their character have kept their liberties,” added Reed. Acton on Tap is an informal gathering in Grand Rapids that takes the message of a free and virtuous society to new audiences.

# David Deavel Receives Novak Award

David P. Deavel, Ph.D., gave the 13th annual Calihan Lecture on Wed., Oct. 30, at the University of St. Thomas Woulfe Auditorium (North) in St. Paul, Minn. Deavel presented “Second Thoughts on Newman: Newman, Constitutions, and Markets.” John Henry Newman was a notable 19th Century English Catholic Cardinal. Deavel is an associate editor of *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* and a contributing editor for *Gilbert Magazine*.

He is currently a fellow of the Center for Catholic Studies at the University of St. Thomas, where he teaches courses in the Department of Catholic Studies and the St. Paul Seminary. The award acknowledges and rewards those who, relatively early in their academic careers, have made significant contributions to the study of the relationship between religion and economic liberty, and who are deemed likely to make further important contributions. Much of Deavel’s

research and writing has been on topics related to the Catholic intellectual tradition, most often reflecting his acquaintance with John Henry Newman and G.K. Chesterton.

“The Calihan Lecture is delivered by the recipient of the Novak Award . . .”

Deavel, is a frequent contributor to Acton’s *Religion & Liberty*, and a host of other publications that include *Catholic World Report*, *First Things*, *Journal of Markets and Morality*, *National Review*, and *Touchstone*. He has also been a faculty member of Acton University in Grand Rapids, Mich.

The Calihan Lecture is delivered by the recipient of the Novak Award, a \$10,000 prize. It is named after the American theologian Michael Novak. Recent past award winners include Giovanni Patriarca (2012), Hunter Baker (2011), and Father Kestutis Kevalas (2010). More information about the Novak Award can be found at [www.acton.org/novak-award](http://www.acton.org/novak-award).



Rev. Robert Sirico presenting the Novak Award to Dr. Deavel.



## ACTON in the News

“How much bigger do some of them think the federal government should be? Is there any upper limit in their mind?”

—Excerpted from Samuel Gregg’s article in *Aleteia*.

### Dylan Pahman

Title: Should Religious Leaders Live a Modest Life?

Program: *BBC World Service*

Air Date: 10.23.13

### Samuel Gregg

Title: Are We Living in Untruth?

Publication: *Aleteia*

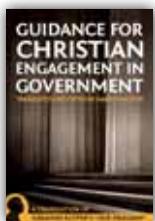
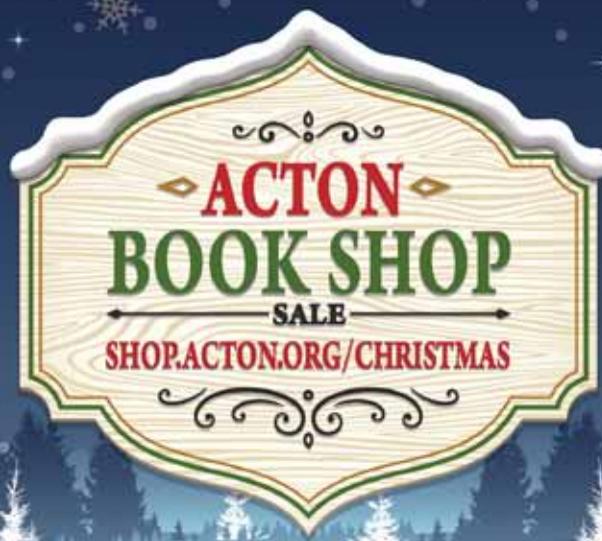
Date: 10.17.13

### Samuel Gregg

Title: Tea Party Catholics

Program: *EWTN: The World Over with Raymond Arroyo*

Air Date: 10.10.13

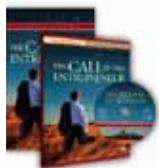


## Guidance for Christian Engagement in Government

*By Abraham Kuyper*

The influence of modern life and its secularizing influence was growing and reshaping the minds and hearts of Europeans and the rest of the Western world. What should the Dutch people believe and understand on the basis of Scripture, sound reason, and common sense?

**Softcover 398 pages    Original Price \$25.00    Sale \$22.00**



## 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 \$10.00**

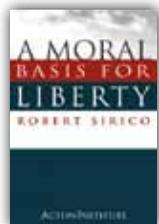


## A Field Guide for the Hero's Journey

*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 \$5.00**



## A Moral Basis for Liberty

*By Rev. Robert A. Sirico*

An outline of the moral foundation of the free market economy, built upon respect for private property and voluntary activity. In this monograph, Fr. Robert Sirico outlines a short, accessible, and compelling case for human liberty. Freedom, he stresses, reflects the truth about the human person.

**Softcover 67 pages    Original Price \$4.00    Sale \$2.00**

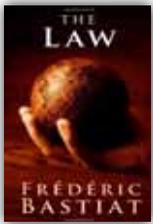


## Ecumenical Babel: Confusing Economic Ideology & the Church's Social Witness

*By Jordan J. Ballor*

A critical engagement of the ecumenical movement's approach to ethical and economic issues, Ecumenical Babel updates a line of criticism articulated by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Paul Ramsey, and Ernest W. Lefever. Arguing for the continuing importance of Christian ecumenism.

**Softcover 167 pages    Original Price \$6.00    Sale \$3.00**



## The Law

By Frederic Bastiat

*The Law* was originally published in French in 1850 by Frederic Bastiat and is the work for which Bastiat is most famous. This translation to American English is from 1874. Frederic Bastiat (1801-1850) was a French economist, statesman and author.

**Softcover 72 pages    Original Price \$5.00    Sale \$4.00**

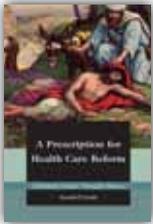


## Environmental Stewardship in the Judeo-Christian Tradition

By Jay Richards

A fair and honest debate about religious responses to environmental issues should always distinguish theological principles from prudential judgments. The Cornwall Declaration and the accompanying essays in this volume were written to do just that.

**Softcover 119 pages    Original Price \$4.00    Sale \$2.00**



## A Prescription for Health Care Reform

By Donald Condit

Access to health care is a basic requirement of a just social order. Physician Donald Condit, drawing on an impressive array of empirical research, skillfully applies the principles of Catholic social teaching to this vital area of concern.

**Softcover 78 pages    Original Price \$6.00    Sale \$3.00**

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<a href="#">Call of the Entrepreneur DVD and study guide</a>	\$10.00		
<a href="#">A Field Guide for the Hero's Journey</a>	\$5.00		
<a href="#">A Moral Basis for Liberty</a>	\$2.00		
<a href="#">Ecumenical Babel: Confusing Economic Ideology &amp; the Church's Social Witness</a>	\$3.00		
<a href="#">The Law</a>	\$4.00		
<a href="#">Environmental Stewardship in the Judeo-Christian Tradition</a>	\$2.00		
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## ACTON notes

### Calendar of Events

#### ACTON INSTITUTE EVENTS

Date	Event	Location
<b>Dec 4</b>	<b>Sustainable Freedom: The Conversation between Christians and Secularists in the Post-Secular Age</b> Rev. Robert Sirico to Moderate	Brussels, Belgium
<b>Jan 30</b>	<b>Acton Lecture Series - Why Libertarians Need God</b> Jay Richards to Speak	Grand Rapids, MI

#### STAFF ACTIVITIES/DEADLINES

Date	Event	Location
<b>Jan 7-9</b>	<b>Asia Liberty Forum 2014</b> Kris Mauren to Speak	Delhi, India