

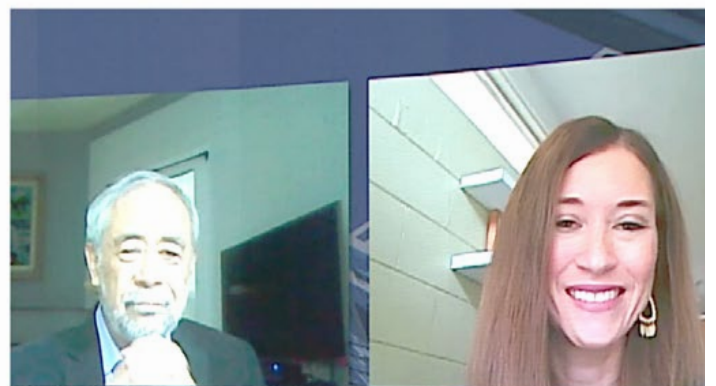
# Notes

November/December Vol. 30 No. 6



**POVERTY  
CURE  
SUMMIT**

AN ACTON INSTITUTE EVENT



## A message from our president

Rev. Robert A. Sirico

The Acton Institute's 30th anniversary has been a time of both reflecting on the past and looking forward to the future. Since its founding, the Acton Institute has been centered on the human person in their individual and intrinsic dignity. It is out of our respect for human persons and their God-given nature that we make a principled and moral case for liberty.

Liberty, in a positive sense, is achieved by fulfilling our nature as persons by freely choosing to do what we ought. It is thus intimately tied to responsibility. This principled and moral case for liberty

extends, of course, to economic matters. Our work in vocations and our stewardship of resources must be freely chosen but also never free from the duties of service to our neighbors.

In this issue, we share the news of our 30th Anniversary Celebration, which I hosted along with Kris Mauren, as well as our second major online conference of the year—the Poverty Cure Summit. These successful virtual events help us not only continue our work amid the COVID-19 pandemic but also reach new and larger audiences with our message. Our mission is conditioned by a responsibility to impact others in new ways.

It is also a pleasure to share our congratulations to Jimmy Lai on the occasion of his reception of

the Faith and Freedom Award for his tireless efforts to promote freedom in Hong Kong and around the world. I would also recommend to you our latest print publication, *Race and Covenant: Recovering the Religious Roots for American Reconciliation*. It is a timely volume with contributions from scholars who explore the past and present of our nation's racial divide and provide a biblical and constructive path toward reconciliation.

None of this would be possible without the generous support of our donors. Thank you! Your support is more important than ever in these difficult times. If you are just learning about Acton, be sure to check out our website, and please prayerfully consider supporting us in our mission.

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## Acton Events REGISTER AT [ACTON.ORG/EVENTS](https://acton.org/events) • WATCH ONLINE AT [ACTON.ORG/LIVE](https://acton.org/live)

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
FEB 4-7	<b>Religion, Liberty and American Culture</b> <b>Conference Series: Co-sponsored by Liberty Fund, Inc.</b> <i>This is an intellectually demanding and stimulating weekend colloquium that explores the foundations of liberty in a mixture of graduate-level, text-based guided Socratic discussion and lecture sessions.</i>	Holland, MI
FEB 25	<b>Business Matters 2021</b> <i>Leading experts and accomplished business leaders will advance a global conversation on important topics relating to business, ethics and entrepreneurship.</i>	Online
MAR 25-28	<b>A Liberty &amp; Markets Colloquium</b> <b>Conference Series: Adam Smith on Ethics and Economics</b> <i>This colloquium is for Acton alumni who are currently enrolled or have recently completed graduate-level work.</i>	Holland, MI

# Acton Institute celebrates 30th anniversary in online program

On November 18, the Acton Institute held its 30th Anniversary Celebration online. The special virtual event was hosted by co-founders Rev. Robert A. Sirico and Kris Alan Mauren and was streamed to supporters worldwide. Rev. Sirico and Mauren began by providing many candid stories from their early days traveling to promote Acton Institute.

Soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Mauren and Rev. Sirico made several trips to Central and Eastern Europe. Mauren shared how a group of supporters in Budapest reached out to ask them to visit, explaining the role Lord Acton had played in the downfall of communism in Hungary. Following the visits, the pair were excited to witness the evolution of the country as it rid itself from the shackles of collectivist ideology. Later, Rev. Sirico shared a humorous story from when they met Margaret Thatcher. Lady Thatcher quoted Acton's famous line, but she omitted a key word. And so Rev. Sirico felt obliged to correct her by delivering the whole quote: "Power *tends* to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." In his best British accent, Sirico offered Thatcher's response back to him: "Rightly so!"

Throughout the event, video clips featured prominent speakers from previous annual dinner celebrations, such as Russell Kirk, William F. Buckley Jr., Chuck Colson and Supreme Court Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas.

The evening's penultimate event came as Mauren and Rev. Sirico presented media

entrepreneur and pro-democracy activist Jimmy Lai with the 2020 Faith and Freedom Award. Lai has had a wonderful relationship with Acton since being featured in the documentary *Call of the Entrepreneur*. His godfather, Wall Street Journal editorial board member William McGurn, has called Lai "Hong Kong's Thomas More."

The Acton Institute's 30th Anniversary Celebration comes at a crucial moment in the West. Socialism, even communism, enjoys disturbingly high levels of popularity in the U.S., especially among young people. And so the work of the Acton Institute is needed now more than ever before. Here's to the next thirty years!

Please visit [acton.org/watch30](https://acton.org/watch30) to watch this event. 







## FEATURED STORY

# Poverty Cure Summit equips leaders


Noah Gould

**T**oo often we begin with a problem, we create programs, and then, as a last step, we look through the eyes of the poor. Ismael Hernandez, a speaker at the Poverty Cure Summit, argued that to improve human flourishing, we need to reverse that order.

The Summit took place on November 18 and 19 and brought together 2,800 students, teachers, non-profit leaders, business leaders and clergy from 70 countries and 49 states to explore real solutions to poverty. These domestic and international experts from both for-profit and nonprofit sectors presented key insights into poverty setbacks and solutions.

Michael Matheson Miller opened the conference with three foundational principles. First, human persons “are not objects to be manipulated or socially engineered” and poor people “are people just like all of us.” Second, “we’ve replaced charity, which is concrete love of the other” with “humanitarianism, which focuses on providing comfort ... but doesn’t take into account seriously enough human flourishing.” Third, the poor don’t just “lack stuff.” They are “excluded from the institutions of justice.” These principles formed a crucial base for the rest of the conference’s content.

The goal of the event was for attendees to engage deeply and come away with new insights. Many attendees shared how beneficial the Summit was because of the diversity in the programming. A global participant said how much they enjoyed “hearing from various speakers, with different backgrounds and experiences, from around the world on many topics.” One attendee emphasized the necessity of compassion on a personal level, saying, “I learned that relationships and connections are more important than programs. I took 23 pages of notes!” Another came away with a more nuanced view of the role of civil institutions. “I learned that poverty is a phenomenon with multiple causes and that non-state institutions have a fundamental role in reducing it, although that role is often underestimated by society.” According to one participant, the role of business was also a key takeaway and “actions taken by entrepreneurs benefit the poor by giving them opportunities to improve their situation by working in useful enterprises and companies.” These insights are the most exciting aspect of the summit because they will continue to bear fruit long after the conference has come to a close.

Although the change in mindset and call to action began at the Poverty Cure Summit, they will not end there. Within the conference portal, attendees have access to resources such as the Poverty Cure video series. Equipped with these vital resources, leaders from across the globe will surely continue to impact their communities. Solutions to poverty must start locally, and to make real change, business owners, entrepreneurs, churches and nonprofits must join together. The Poverty Cure Summit is a significant step in the right direction. 



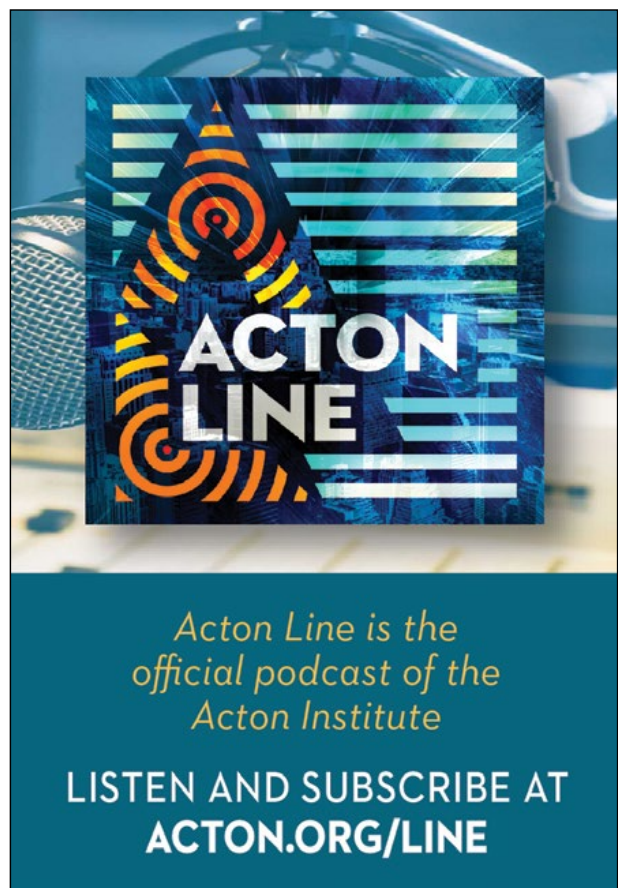
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Acton Institute*

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**BRIEF**

## New book release: *Race and Covenant*

Ben Stoner


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The United States is consumed with questions regarding race, the legacy of slavery and the nature of social justice. Where are people of faith to turn?

In *Race and Covenant: Recovering the Religious Roots of American Reconciliation*, an anthology edited by Gerald R. McDermott, the authors explore the theme of national covenant in scripture, history and contemporary American society, as well as the theology and practices of covenant communities. Its authors suggest new strategies for finding racial reconciliation in this troubled time.

“This nation is hurting,” writes McDermott, who is retired from the Anglican Chair of Divinity at Beeson Divinity School, in the book’s introduction. “In many ways it is broken, and racial division is a big part of that brokenness. But there is hope. The source is spiritual, not political. It comes from humility and prayer and seeking God’s face.”

McDermott points out that for most of the last 2,000 years, Christians have believed that God deals with nations as nations. And God enters into closer relations with societies that claim him as Lord. This belief in the national covenant, only recently out of fashion, is where Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King Jr. turned when faced with such questions in their own times.

Order your copy of *Race and Covenant* today at [shop.acton.org](http://shop.acton.org). 

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**BRIEF**


## Faith and Freedom Award presented to Jimmy Lai

Rev. Ben Johnson

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During the Acton Institute’s 30th Anniversary Celebration, streamed online, media entrepreneur and pro-democracy activist Jimmy Lai was presented with the 2020 Faith and Freedom Award. The award was well deserved, as Jimmy Lai has displayed sterling character in the face of totalitarian adversity. Lai’s love of freedom recently landed him in government confinement. More than 200 police officers stormed the offices of Lai’s newspaper on August 10 to arrest him and two of his sons for violating China’s draconian “national security law.” He was acquitted of that case in September, but the possibility of a longer prison term looms over the 71-year-old.

The one-hour celebration traversed the full history of the Acton Institute, from the day co-founders Rev. Robert A. Sirico and Kris Alan Mauren met to their trips through the rubble of the Berlin Wall and their triumphant visits to the ash heap of socialism as the free market outperformed command economics in the former Eastern Bloc.

The evening’s penultimate event came as Mauren and Rev. Sirico presented Lai with the 2020 Faith and Freedom Award. “I thank Friedrich Hayek for his inspirations for me to determine to fight for freedom in my life,” said Lai. “I came here with one dollar, and the freedom here has given me the opportunity to build up myself. And the value that is underlying this freedom is so precious, and that’s exactly what we are fighting for in Hong Kong now.” 

# RACE

## *and Covenant*

Recovering the Religious Roots  
for American Reconciliation

Edited by **Gerald R. McDermott**

RACE AND COVENANT:  
RECOVERING THE  
RELIGIOUS ROOTS FOR  
AMERICAN  
RECONCILIATION

Edited by  
**Gerald R. McDermott**

PUBLISHED BY  
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