

Notes

November/December Vol. 29 No. 6



Andrew Klavan speaks at Acton's 29th Annual Dinner

A message from our president

Rev. Robert A. Sirico

The dignity of human persons and our potential to freely choose moral goods are marred and frustrated by the reality of sin. Our hearts are often divided, tragically working against our own nature, our neighbors and our very God. The reality of sin makes the state necessary to restrain evil. The ubiquity of sin, however, requires that the state be limited in its power and jurisdiction. This persistent reality of sin requires that we be skeptical of all utopian “solutions” to problems that are not grounded in faith in God,

moral restraint according to natural law and the necessity of God’s grace in our fallen world.

This is why the Acton Institute has always seen virtue as the essential companion to freedom. To paraphrase Lord Acton, liberty is not merely the power to follow our desires but the right to fulfill our duties. In this issue, you will read about programing geared toward engaging with false solutions, such as Marxism, cronyism and the arbitrary power of judges, which ignore the reality of sin in our world. You will also learn about recent publications by Acton that address the pressing issue of student debt and the wonderful new monograph *The*

American Experiment in Ordered Liberty.

The Acton Institute could not engage the public, academics and leaders in the church and in business on these vital issues without the support of our generous donors. Thank you for your continued support of the Acton Institute. If you are just learning about Acton, we invite you to find additional resources on our website. Please also prayerfully consider supporting us in our mission to present the moral vision for a truly free society. It is only in a society both free and virtuous that human persons can fulfill their God-given nature by acting in accord with it, resisting temptation and serving others. N

Acton Events

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DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
JAN 23	Acton Lecture Series The Rise of Morality in Civic Discourse	Grand Rapids, MI
JAN 29	Conference Series Community Restoration & Civil Society	Denver, CO
FEB 29	Conference Series From Thinking to Thriving: Economics, Work & Human Flourishing	Huntington Beach, CA

Acton hosts second Business Matters conference

On October 17, the Acton Institute held its second Business Matters event, a one-day conference that brings together entrepreneurs and business leaders to explore the good that business does.

Executive director and co-founder of the Acton Institute, Kris Mauren, gave opening remarks. “Business does matter... work through enterprise is the normative way individuals rise out of poverty and pay for the basic needs of our families,” said Mauren. “But can work and enterprise have a richer meaning for us than the riches it brings to us? Can it be a way to live out and discover a spiritual calling? These are great questions that we will raise and discuss throughout the day.” Examples of bad business force us to ask these questions, to seek to answer what good business looks like and what the deeper meaning of work is. Through panel discussions, interviews and a luncheon lecture, topics such as the theological underpinnings of work, the role of the entrepreneur, and innovation in business were explored.

The conference consisted of three panel discussions and a lunch presentation, with guests such as Jim Otteson, Thomas W. Smith Presidential Chair in Business Ethics at Wake Forest University; JoAnn Flett, Organizational Consultant for Partners Worldwide; and Andreas Widmer, Assistant Professor of Entrepreneurship at The Catholic University of America’s Busch School of Business and Economics. “If

we want to continue to train students in finance and marketing and accounting...then we need to explain how it is that that can be inherently valuable,” explained Otteson.

During the conference, episodes of Acton’s short film series *The Good Society* premiered, including one that explores the impact of entrepreneurship as seen through the lens of a world-class game lodge in South Africa. Kozuko Lodge was founded on the idea of creating a relationship between conservation, job creation and social transformation. Learn more about *The Good Society* at Acton.org/tgs. To register for upcoming conferences, view Acton’s full event calendar at acton.org/events. **N**



Andrew Klavan keynotes Acton's 29th Annual Dinner



On October 15, the Acton Institute welcomed over 600 guests to its Annual Dinner at the JW Marriot in downtown Grand Rapids. A crowd consisting of college presidents and faculty, Acton staff and other supporters of Acton came from across the United States as well as the United Kingdom to join friends of Acton for a celebration of the Institute's 29th year.


Acton's Annual Dinner is the largest single-day gathering the institute hosts. Every year, Acton staff and volunteers look forward to this time of fellowship with supporters from all over the world. The evening's keynote speaker was Andrew Klavan. Klavan is the author of such internationally bestselling crime novels as *True Crime*, filmed by Clint Eastwood; *Don't Say a Word*, filmed by and starring Michael Douglas; and *Empire of Lies*. Andrew is a contributing editor to *City Journal*, the magazine of the Manhattan Institute, and has written numerous articles for them, including a report from an embed with American troops in Afghanistan. His essays on politics, religion, movies and literature have appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, the *LA Times* and elsewhere. He also hosts *The Andrew Klavan Show* podcast for the Daily Wire.

During his address, Klavan shared the story of his journey from atheism to faith in Jesus Christ and laid out his views on how to reach out to a culture that has largely abandoned not only Biblical truth but the very idea of truth itself. “Our culture is in the grip of increasingly bizarre delusions,” said Klavan. “If there is no ultimate truth, there can be no truth at all. If there is no ultimate good, there can be no good at all...This materialistic outlook is so pervasive now that it affects all of us.” So how can we speak truth into a culture dominated by progressive political correctness, where the claim that there is no ultimate truth reigns? To reunite reason and faith and reignite the spirit of the West, “we must enter the marketplace, the classroom, the theater and the tavern,” Klavan proposed. We must “ask questions and tell stories, and as for the consequences, like Socrates and Jesus, we’re going to have to take our chances.”

Acton’s president and co-founder, Rev. Robert Sirico, gave closing remarks addressing resurgent socialism in America and how we can reclaim the culture. “Our opponents are not merely our ideological enemies, but many of them are people really searching for justice, meaning and purpose in the world!” reminded Sirico. “We have an opportunity to propose ideas of coherent economics...and an occasion to share an anthropological underpinning of what makes for human civilization.”

The Acton Institute exists to do just that and now more than ever this mission is so critical. Needed now is an understanding of who we are, why we are in the world and “why we must build a society that is worthy of men and women made in the image and the likeness of the almighty God.”

All speeches from the dinner are available online at Acton.org. ■



**ACTON
LINE**

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ACTON LECTURE SERIES

<p>January 23 <i>The Rise of Morality in Civic Discourse</i></p>	<p>February 20 <i>Faith, Freedom, and the Cold War Architect</i></p>
	
<p>Adam J. MacLeod, J.D. <i>Professor of Law, Faulkner University School of Law</i></p>	<p>John D. Wilsey, Ph.D. <i>Associate Professor of Church History, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary</i></p>

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BRIEF

Book release: *The American Experiment in Ordered Liberty*

The question of whether Catholicism is compatible with the American project in liberal democracy remains contentious. Many contemporary Catholic writers and intellectuals answer in the negative.

In *The American Experiment in Ordered Liberty*, the newest addition to Acton's Christian Social Thought Series, John Pinheiro brings historical expertise to the topic, assessing the merits of the American project by focusing on the founding period. He examines the views of the founders and the realities of early American culture in light of the principles of Catholic social teaching and finds no simple answer to the question of Catholic and American compatibility.

"The answer rests on what 'compatibility' means," writes Pinheiro. "John Paul II knew that to talk of compatibility with democracy is not to approve every decision the *demos* makes, any more than our freedom of the will means God approves every decision we make."

The American experiment was not the realization of an ideological agenda; instead, it was the practical outworking of a commitment to protect traditional liberties.

Pinheiro points out that the task given to Catholics is not to raze the institutions of religious and political liberty but instead to "redeem the time" by embracing good and opposing evil in our own day.

Preorder your copy of *The American Experiment in Ordered Liberty* today at shop.acton.org. **N**

BRIEF

New issue of *Religion & Liberty* tackles higher education

The newest issue of Acton's *Religion & Liberty* quarterly magazine, volume 29, number 2, explores issues in higher education, including student debt and rampant progressive bias in academia.

Since 1978 – the year the federal government offered subsidized loans to all students – the cost of college tuition has risen by 1,375 percent. Approximately 1,400 students default on those loans every day. "In short, more money cannot solve this problem and would only exacerbate it," writes Rev. Robert Sirico. "What is desperately needed is entrepreneurial innovation, a new and more productive way of teaching and learning. As long as education is captured by politics, risk averse bureaucracy and unions, this can never happen."

The cover story by Anne Rathbone Bradley unravels the crisis of student debt. "The essential problem of student loan debt and high tuition fees is not the loans themselves," Bradley writes, "but the skyrocketing costs that are due to heavy government interference in higher education."

Trey Dimsdale complements her essay with an article describing why proposals to "erase" student loan debt will only create additional moral hazards. "Education, like every other good, has a point of market equilibrium, and any scheme to subsidize it will distort the market," he explains.

This issue of *Religion & Liberty* also features an excerpt from Samuel Gregg's *Reason, Faith and the Struggle for Western Civilization*. Subscribe to *Religion & Liberty* at acton.org/pub/religion-liberty. **N**

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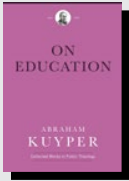


The American Experiment in Ordered Liberty

Sale \$8.00

By John Pinheiro

The question of whether Catholicism is compatible with the American project in liberal democracy remains contentious. In this volume, Professor John Pinheiro brings historical expertise to the topic, assessing the merits of the American project by focusing on the founding period. **Softcover, 102 pages**

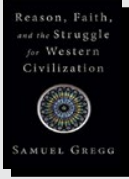


On Education

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By Abraham Kuyper

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Reason, Faith and the Struggle for Western Civilization

Sale \$20.99

By Samuel Gregg

The genius of Western civilization is its unique synthesis of reason and faith. But today that synthesis is under attack—from the East by radical Islam (faith without reason) and from within the West itself by aggressive secularism (reason without faith). The stakes are incalculably high. **Hardcover, 256 pages**



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On Education	\$49.99	_____	_____
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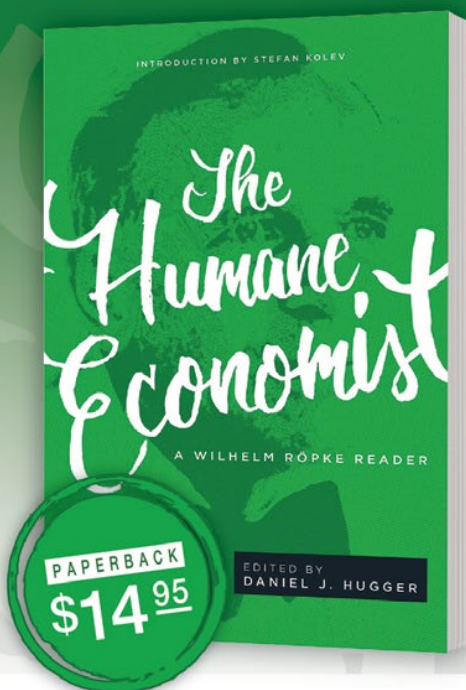
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THE HUMANE ECONOMIST: A WILHELM RÖPKE READER

Edited by DANIEL J. HUGGER Introduction by STEFAN KOLEV

ACTON INSTITUTE • Paperback 336 Pgs • ISBN 978-1-942503-51-4

Nobel laureate Friedrich Hayek once warned that “the economist who is only an economist is likely to become a nuisance if not a positive danger.” As an economist and theorist of liberalism, Wilhelm Röpke was acutely aware of this danger. His combined commitments to sound economic analysis, the importance of social institutions, and the moral and religious framework of the Christian tradition make him a unique figure in the history of economic and social thought. This anthology, through carefully chosen selections from Röpke’s writings, introduces the contemporary reader to this most humane economist and theorist of the free and virtuous society.

“This volume is a great place for students of society to start to learn about the humane economy and its relevance for the twenty-first century.” – Peter Boettke, GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

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