

# ACTON notes

Acton Institute Newsletter

January / February 2019, Volume 29, Number 1



*“connecting good intentions with sound economics”*

## In This Issue

- Dominicans and modernity • Radio Free Acton podcast is renamed; now Acton Line
- UK to investigate global Christian persecution • Yellow vest protests: the uprising of a generation

# President's Message

By the time this message reaches Acton readers, it will already be 2019. As has been repeated often, time flies when you're having fun.

"This coming year we will continue to hold the line against statism."

After all, what could be more rewarding than getting to provide learning experiences worldwide to individuals and groups eager to immerse themselves in ideas of sound economics and virtuous behavior? Equally satisfying are the inroads we continue to make with those who previously expressed skepticism concerning the benefits of free markets for not only the poor but also people of all walks of life.

The past few years have presented several challenges to our mission. Among them are lawmakers who either possess minimal understanding of basic economics or succumb to the allure of crony capitalism. Additionally, the rise of populist movements such as Occupy Wall Street and support of self-proclaimed Democratic Socialist political candidates threaten our forward momentum. Although we have accomplished much over the past few decades, we still have plenty of work to do to counter such misbegotten ideologies.

Cultural setbacks, however, should not prevent us from celebrating our accomplishments from the past year. Although Acton University has become the crown jewel of the Acton Institute's educational mission, we hosted dozens of renowned speakers at our headquarters on a weekly basis throughout the year. We also hosted our first Business Matters conference this past October, gathering entrepreneurs and business owners to discuss how their endeavors reflect their respective religious obligations. Last, but not least, members of our staff continued to write and publish numerous works of tremendous spiritual insight and economic clarity.

Throughout 2019, we will attempt to expand on our 2018 efforts. For example, we look forward to hosting many more insightful speakers at our Acton Lecture Series events in addition to our upcoming FAVS events and Acton University 2019, not to mention a full year of publication content.

This coming year we will continue to hold the line against statism. Thank you for your generosity and participation in helping us advance the causes of freedom and virtuous living.

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)

# Dominicans and modernity

On December 4, the Acton Institute and its Rome office concluded another successful international conference, Freedom, Virtue and the Good Society: The Dominican Contribution. The 380-person overflow crowd at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas included participants from the Angelicum itself and other pontifical universities, various religious and missionary orders, diverse sectors of business, non-profits and political leadership, as well as representatives from diplomatic corps to the Holy See.

Promoted as a “sequel” to the November 2017 conference on the Jesuit contribution to building up a free and just globalized world, this conference focused on the specifically Dominican tradition in sustaining a freer, virtuous and just society.

Speakers included Sr. Catherine Joseph Droste, O.P., vice dean of theology at the Angelicum; Fr. Martin Rhonheimer, president of the Austrian Institute of Economics and Social Philosophy; Jay Richards, research professor at the Catholic University of America’s Busch School of Business; and others.

Acton’s Samuel Gregg gave the afternoon’s final lecture, titled “Henri-Dominique Lacordaire: A Dominican Faces Modernity,” in which much of the moral discussion of a free and just society centered not on how politicians or business persons can be corrupted or corrected, but on how the Church’s clergy and institutions may become run afoul of the Church’s moral mission – or at least forced to sacrifice some sovereignty and religious freedom to the state.

It was a persistent, incorrigible Henri-Dominique Lacordaire who re-established the Dominican order in post-revolutionary France. He wanted the Church to be completely free of the “strings attached” to state contributions, which compromised their liberty to fully teach, preach or act as they wanted.

The Acton Institute’s next Rome conference will take place in the academic year 2019. In the meantime, you may watch the concluded Rome conference in its entirety on [Livestream.com/ActonInstitute/Rome2018](https://www.livestream.com/ActonInstitute/Rome2018).



An overflow of attendees at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas.



Acton's Samuel Gregg gave the afternoon's final lecture.

## From Our Conference Participants

Acton has opened to me a spiritual, professional and educational community that I longed for but did not know existed until I attended Acton University.

—Jay Langdale  
Troy University

The information I received in the classes at Acton University was influential and rich and has had a direct impact on my own teaching.

—Hannah Hull  
True Charity Initiative



## Radio Free Acton podcast is renamed; now Acton Line

The podcast of the Acton Institute, Radio Free Acton, now goes by a new name: Acton Line.

Acton Line features the same content, guests and production value as Radio Free Acton. Listeners can expect to continue hearing from their favorite guests and hosts. Now featuring more segments and an expanded availability on podcast directories, Acton Line is easier than ever to listen to. Subscribers of Radio Free Acton will not have to re-subscribe to Acton Line – it's virtually the same podcast but with a new name.

Acton Institute began releasing podcast episodes in 2008, occasionally publishing conversations with guest lecturers, but in 2017 began releasing episodes each Wednesday. Over 80 episodes and 100 guests later, podcast listenership grew 60 percent and it became time to give the podcast a face-lift.

When it comes to listening to Acton Line on your mobile device, there are a host of apps you can use.

us at [Actonline@acton.org](mailto:Actonline@acton.org) or leaving us a message at 888-705-4180. If you like what you hear on Acton Line, don't forget to leave a review and rating on iTunes.

## UK to investigate global Christian persecution

On the day after Christmas, the British government launched a review of Christian persecution in “key countries” – especially in the Middle East, Asia and Africa – to seek ways the UK can help those who are suffering.

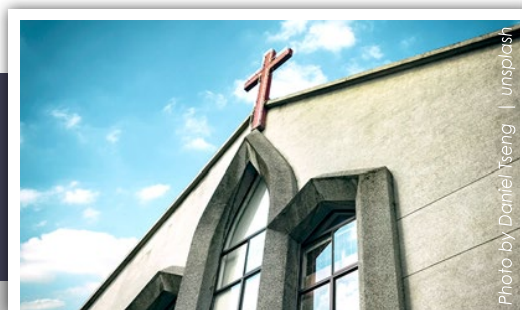
Christianity is on the “verge of extinction in its birthplace,” said Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, who ordered the report. “So often the persecution of Christians is a telling early warning sign of the persecution of every minority.”

Bishop Philip Mounstephen, the Anglican bishop of Truro, will lead the effort to uncover “the scale of the problem” and “offer ambitious policy recommendations” to the government. The report is scheduled to be completed by Easter

## ACTON News



Radio Free Acton is now Acton Line.



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Or, if you own an iPhone, you already have everything you need! Every iPhone comes with Apple Podcast pre-installed. Simply open up the app, search for Acton Line and hit subscribe.

As Acton Line continues to grow, we want to prioritize our listeners. Let us know what you like and what you would like to hear more of by emailing

A second report on Christian persecution conducted by the international monitoring group Open Doors confirmed that economic liberty and religious liberty are correlated. It named North Korea as the most repressive anti-Christian nation in the world. The worst offenders also have a low regard for property rights as measured by the Fraser Institute's Economic Freedom Report, which ranks nations from one to 162.

The UK government, and all Christians, must recognize the inherent link between freedom of conscience and the right to own property in a free economy.

# Yellow vest protests: the uprising of a generation

The rise of the *gilets jaunes* rioters in France took many people by surprise. President Emmanuel Macron has caved in to the rioters' demands and offered other policy concessions to try to mollify them. By doing so he is exacerbating the problems that led people to take to the streets. His actions will certainly not resolve France's underlying economic problems.

During the week of December 10, an estimated 130,000 people took part in the riots. Police arrested more than 1,700 people. Officials said that 264 people were injured, including 39 police and gendarmes and several journalists. These riots are serious events and the concern must be that they are the beginning of a trend. High fuel costs, high taxes and the high cost of living were the main factors behind the rioting. However, high levels of unemployment (in part caused by extraordinarily high taxes on low-paid labor) was also to blame.

Arguably, we are beginning to see the results of the disastrous decisions to set up pay-as-you-go pension and healthcare systems after the Second

World War. Instead of each generation building up savings to provide for the expenses of old age, the taxes of the working generation pay for the pensions and healthcare of the retired generation in these unsustainable systems.

State pension schemes run on a pay-as-you-go basis are often known as "social solidarity" schemes, especially in France. This is a terrible misnomer. The mechanism by which a given generation of workers votes themselves pension and health benefits, expecting the next generation to pay for them, seems designed to create social conflict.

Christians should speak out against the injustice of generations promising themselves benefits to be paid for by other future generations – indeed, they should have spoken out 30 years ago. The current systems of welfare provision are unsustainable, unjust and may well lead to the breakdown of civil society and an increased tendency of young people to turn to violence to get what they regard as just restitution.



Photo by Olivier Ortelpa  
Police using tear gas on the streets of Paris during riots in December 2018.



Gilet jaune - Photo by Pascal Maga

## ACTON in the News

"[W]hile Burke was wary of wrenching principles out of their context, he recognized the saliency of natural law for political, legal or economic arrangements that promoted regimes characterized neither by license nor tyranny but rather by ordered liberty."

—Excerpted from Samuel Gregg's article  
"Edmund Burke: Natural Lawyer"

### Alejandro Chafuen

Title: John Locke, Reason, Christianity  
And Christmas  
Publication: Forbes  
Date: 12.23.18

### Samuel Gregg

Title: Edmund Burke: Natural Lawyer  
Publication: Law & Liberty  
Date: 12.19.18

### Rev. Robert Sirico

Title: Why Christians Should Embrace  
Free Markets  
Program: Ron Paul Liberty Report  
Date: 12.13.18

## 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 [acton.org/donate](http://acton.org/donate) to make a secure donation online. We send our heartfelt thanks to those of you 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.

## INTRODUCE ACTON TO A FRIEND

KNOW SOMEONE WHO WOULD BE INTERESTED IN THE WORK OF THE ACTON INSTITUTE? USE OUR WEBSITE TO SEND THEM AN EMAIL WITH INFORMATION ON OUR PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES. THANKS FOR PROMOTING FREEDOM AND VIRTUE!

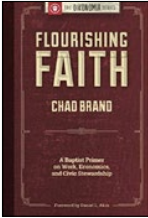
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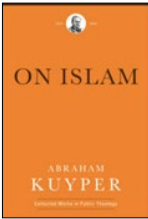


## Flourishing Faith: A Baptist Primer

By *Chad Brand*

In *Flourishing Faith*, Dr. Chad Brand examines key issues of the history and theology of political economy: work, wealth, government, and taxation with its various implications. Brand then explores the philosophy of how government relates to political economy and highlights how Baptists have contributed.

**Softcover 152 pages    Sale \$10.00**

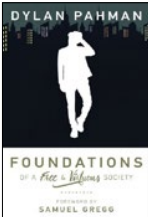


## On Islam

By *Abraham Kuyper*

*On Islam* compiles Kuyper’s significant writings on Islam. It will be of particular relevance for today’s readers—who live in a world where Islam’s role on the global scene is visible and controversial, its future so significant, and its relationship with Christianity so decisive for both faiths.

**Hardcover 363 pages    Sale \$49.99**

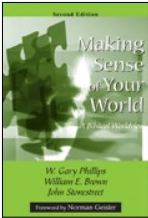


## Foundations of a Free & Virtuous Society

By *Dylan Pahman*

Creative, quirky and always winsome, Dylan Pahman builds a systematic case for a positive relationship between a biblical understanding of the human person and the economic flourishing that freedom enables.

**Softcover 168 pages    Sale \$14.95**



## Making Sense of Your World: A Biblical Worldview

By *W. Gary Phillips, William E. Brown and John Stonestreet*

*Making Sense of Your World* offers a basic, accessible introduction to biblical worldview that covers all of these aspects of worldview thinking. Part One compares the basic worldviews, Part Two contrasts the biblical worldview with the others, and Part Three constructs a biblical worldview in four key areas.

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## ACTON notes

### Calendar of Events

#### ACTON INSTITUTE EVENTS

Date	Event	Location
Mar 7	<b>An Evening in Chicago with P. J. O'Rourke</b> With a special address from Rev. Robert Sirico	Chicago, IL
Mar 21	<b>Acton Lecture Series</b> William Penn and the American Experiment of Liberty	Grand Rapids, MI
Mar 28	<b>Liberty &amp; Markets Series</b> Evaluating the Idea of Social Justice - A Liberty & Markets Colloquium	Grand Rapids, MI
Apr 3	<b>Acton Institute on Tap</b> Alienated America: How Secularization is Killing Middle America	Grand Rapids, MI
Jun 18	<b>Acton University</b> A four-day exploration of the intellectual foundations of a free society	Grand Rapids, MI