

# ACTON notes

Acton Institute Newsletter

January / February 2018, Volume 28, Number 1



*“connecting good intentions with sound economics”*

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# President's Message

Over the course of the past 27 years, Acton has weathered social upheavals and periods of economic boom and bust. Much of our continuous success is attributable to our ability to adapt to the world outside our walls.

“All our efforts are in the service of realizing how we hope to transform the world for the better.”

Through the years, Acton and its staff of administrators, intellectuals and professionals have ensured our institute's longevity and continued relevance year after year by fully engaging with the world as it was and how it exists today. All our efforts are in the service of realizing how we hope to transform the world for the better.

For example, a mere few weeks before putting pen to paper for this message, I had the great honor of participating in a one-day conference in Rome. “Globalization, Justice and the Economy: The Jesuit Contribution” marked the 17th year that Acton has hosted and planned such events in Rome.

The conference displays the Acton Institute's enduring mission to preserve the economic, philosophical and theological precepts of the past. In so doing, our combined research and areas of study – no matter how seemingly arcane – may continue to enlighten our spiritual and political leaders today and for many tomorrows.

In this issue of *Acton Notes*, readers will note as well the announcement of the translation of Abraham Kuyper's *On Islam*. Written in the early 20th century, *On Islam* is one of several of Kuyper's theological works the Acton Institute has translated in partnership with the Abraham Kuyper Translation Society and Lexham Press.

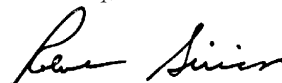
Since our inception, Acton has been engaged in promoting scholarship, theology, economics and art through the centuries and from around the globe. The past 27 years of Acton's published output represents the remarkable production of countless fine minds of many nationalities and systems of faith.

Those who haven't been onboard since Acton's beginnings are now able to access the wealth of our accumulated writings through the Acton Learn Pages. This new initiative will allow readers to play catch-up while continuing to follow our daily and weekly accomplishments that go on to make a difference in the public square.

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)

# Learn Pages offer simplified learning tools

In autumn 2017, Acton's website unveiled a new initiative: Acton Learn Pages. Website visitors can now pick a particular track and engage with Acton resources at their own pace. The Learn section is broken into three categories: curricula, history and collections.

Curricula showcases all of Acton's learning curricula in one place and features "For the Life of the World: Letters to the Exiles," "The Birth of Freedom DVD Study Set" and the "PovertyCureReThink Missions" kit. You can visit the websites for each of these curricula to learn more or to purchase them.

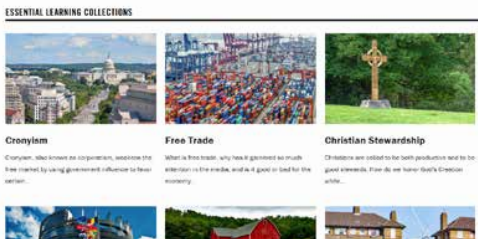
Learn's history category highlights the institute's namesake, Lord John Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton. You can explore Acton's life and writings under "Lord Acton 101" or you can purchase the new collection, *Lord Acton: Historical and Moral Essays*. Also featured under history are the "Heroes of Liberty." Learn more about the men and women who fought for the cause of freedom and liberty throughout history. Featured "heroes"

include Michael Novak, Sojourner Truth, Luis de Molina and many, many more.

Finally, under the Learn banner is collections. Here readers can choose a collection or track to follow to learn more about a particular topic, with curated resources from Acton scholars. Collection issues include Crony capitalism, environment, the European Union, international trade, poverty and Lord Acton. Under the collection issues are more specialized tracks or essential learning collections. Essential learning collections include Cronyism, free trade, Christian stewardship, the future of the European Union, farm subsidies and inequality. Once a track is chosen, the learner can find essays, publications and videos on the topic.

Acton's website upgrade in late 2016 has enabled the institute to offer 27 years of writing and research to our followers in a free and easy-to-use tool for continued learning and research.

To start your own journey, visit [acton.org/learn](http://acton.org/learn).



An online screenshot of Acton's new Learn section.



At Acton Learn you can view Acton's 27 years of writing and research.

## From Our Conference Participants

I must testify that I really enjoyed the lectures and entire organization of the conference. I appreciate all the good effort the Acton Institute and Gregorian University put to enlighten us more on "Globalization, Justice and the Economy: The Jesuit Contribution."

—Leonard E  
Rome, Italy

I studied project planning and management at postgraduate masters level and I found economics exciting and very relevant in ministry too. "Globalization, Justice and the Economy: The Jesuit Contribution" opened new avenues for me.

—Event attendee

## Conference contemplates Jesuit contributions to economics and justice

On November 29, Acton Institute and the Pontifical Gregorian University co-hosted a special one-day conference in Rome: “Globalization, Justice and the Economy: The Jesuit Contribution.” The popular event, the largest conference for Istituto Acton and the Pontifical Gregorian University, had nearly 400 attendees and was standing room only for many of the lectures. It was attended by a healthy mix of students, professors, diplomats, journalists and lay professionals from all over the globe. Istituto Acton has been hosting and planning academic events in Rome for 17 years.

The current era of globalization, with all its opportunities and challenges, is not the first time the Church has had to grapple with economic changes on a global scale. In the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries, Catholic theologians explored the moral, political and economic implications of expanding commerce and trade routes across the globe – to India, China, Africa and, of course, the New World.

# ACTON News



Rev. Sirico with Novak Award winner Wim Decock in Rome.

Many of these theologians and moralists were members of the recently founded Society of Jesus. Jesuits such as Juan de Mariana, Luis de Molina and Leonardus Lessius explored the ethics of contracts, trade, money and the state’s role in the economy. They also made important, though often overlooked, contributions to the development of economics and political economy.

The 2017 Novak Award winner, Wim Decock, presented the Calihan Lecture, “Knowing before Judging: Law and Economic Analysis in Early Modern Jesuit Ethics.” Following the conference, he was officially presented with the Novak Award

and \$15,000 in prize money. The Novak Award, honoring the late Michael Novak, recognizes scholars early in their academic career who demonstrate outstanding intellectual merit in advancing the understanding of theology’s connection to human dignity, the importance of the rule of law, limited government, religious liberty and freedom in economic life.

Other speakers at the November 29 conference included Rev. Dr. Diego Alonso-Lasheras of the Pontifical Gregorian University, Alejandro Chafuen of the Atlas Network and Samuel Gregg of the Acton Institute. Gregg opened the conference with a lecture on the Renaissance’s commercial revolution. “One of the Commercial Revolution’s most important features,” Gregg noted, “was growth in the available amounts of capital. . . . This was accompanied by increased trading in money and credit, and accelerating demand for commercial loans. This internationalization of finance followed and facilitated the internationalization of European economies.”

In the next speech, Alonso-Lasheras described Luis de Molina’s three types of value (legal, just and



Rome conference attendees

natural) to explain the notion of a fair price. “The natural price,” he explained, “was the price of a good determined by the nature of the good itself, without the intervention of a human law or decree.” Chafuen lectured on the relationship between Christian anthropology and commercial exchange, focusing on the writings of Juan de Mariana, a 16th-century Spanish Jesuit priest.

The event was free and open to the public. The entire conference was livestreamed so viewers all over the world could join the event. You can watch a recording of the conference at [acton.org/Rome2017](http://acton.org/Rome2017).

## On Islam available for first time in English

Early in the 20th century, Abraham Kuyper toured the Mediterranean and came into direct contact with Islamic cultures. His book on the subject, *On Islam*, is a European statesman's take on both the harm of colonialism and the significance of the Islamic faith and culture. Throughout the book, Kuyper's doctrine of common grace shines as he displays a nuanced and respectful understanding of the Muslim world. He saw Islam not only as a culture and religion with much to offer the West but also as a threat to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Throughout the book he expresses a balanced view of early 20th-century Islam that demands attention from the majority of the world today. This new volume also includes essays by contemporary scholars, explaining the relevance of this book for our times.

David G. Cahsin, professor of intercultural studies at Columbia International University, says that "Kuyper's travelogue volume written at the turn of the 20th century is an invaluable time capsule for understanding Islam."

Kuyper served as a member of Parliament in the

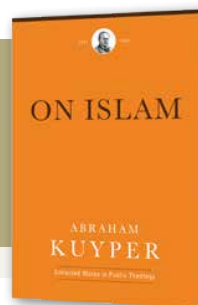
Netherlands beginning in 1874 and was prime minister from 1901 to 1905. A prolific intellectual and theologian, he founded the Free University in Amsterdam and was instrumental in the development of Neo-Calvinism. At this intersection of church and state, Kuyper devoted much of his writing to developing a public theology.

For the first time, Abraham Kuyper's key works in public theology will be published in English. Comprised of eight key works spread over 12 volumes, the Abraham Kuyper Collected Works in Public Theology series will be made available in both a high-quality hardback edition and as an e-book. General editors of the project are Jordan J. Ballor and Melvin Fliikkema. Available titles include *Our Program*, *Common Grace Volume 1*, *On the Church*, *Pro Rege Volumes 1 and 2* and now *On Islam*.

The Kuyper Translation Project is a partnership between the Abraham Kuyper Translation Society, Lexham Press and the Acton Institute. Learn more at [abrahamkuyper.com](http://abrahamkuyper.com) or [shop.acton.org](http://shop.acton.org) and search for "Kuyper Collected Works in Public Theology."



Islamic praying. Credit: istockphoto.com © sayood



## ACTON in the News

"History bears witness to the human experience that those societies exercising the most freedom experience the greatest relief from poverty. It should come as no surprise that the percentage of the world's population living in extreme poverty has been reduced by 50 percent over the last quarter-century precisely for this reason."

—Excerpted from Rev. Robert Sirico's article  
in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

### Samuel Gregg

Title: Capitalism, Conservative and the Intellectuals  
Publication: Public Discourse  
Date: 10.11.17

### Samuel Gregg

Title: Edmund Burke's Conservative Case for Free Markets  
Publication: Burkean Journal  
Date: 11.02.17

### Rev. Robert Sirico

Title: Despite evidence, myth of the Marxist utopia persists  
Publication: *The Philadelphia Inquirer*  
Date: 11.06.17

## 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 the Acton website 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!

Visit: [www.acton.org/refer](http://www.acton.org/refer)

### ACTON'S 27TH ANNUAL DINNER



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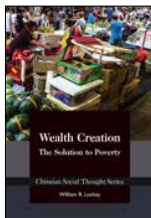


## The Evidence of Things Not Seen

By *Vernon Smith*

Religious and non-religious people alike commonly assert that religion and science occupy two entirely separate and distinct realms. But what if science and religion share something deeply mysterious in common? What if that mysterious commonality is faith?

**Softcover 67 pages Sale \$4.75**

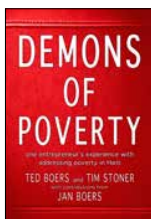


## Wealth Creation: The Solution to Poverty

By *William Luckey*

Care for the poor has been a hallmark of Christianity since its beginning. Yet the economic world that provides the context for both Christianity and poverty has changed dramatically since the time of Christ. Professor Luckey helps us to understand that context by tracing the history of Christian thought.

**Softcover 66 pages Sale \$6.50**

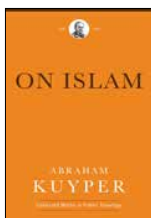


## Demons of Poverty

By *Ted Boers and Tim Stoner*

For ten years, Ted Boers, a well-intentioned, successful entrepreneur, devoted himself to improving the conditions of the poor in Haiti. His journey would take him into many dark places including a crisis of faith that launched him on a mission to discover what he did not know and wished he had known before he began.

**Softcover 188 pages Sale \$10.50**



## On Islam

By *Abraham Kuyper*

*On Islam* compiles Kuyper's significant writings on Islam. This anthology will allow readers to follow Kuyper's model for observing another faith and its cultural ramifications from an informed Christian point of view. It will be of relevance for today's readers—where Islam's role is on the global scene.

**Hardcover 363 pages Sale \$49.99**

For our fastest service and a complete list of titles, visit [store.acton.org](http://store.acton.org)

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<a href="#">Demons of Poverty</a>	\$10.50		
<a href="#">On Islam</a>	\$49.99		

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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## ACTON notes

### Calendar of Events

#### ACTON INSTITUTE EVENTS

Date	Event	Location
Jan 25	<b>Acton Lecture Series: Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse</b> <i>Family Breakdown and the Economy</i>	Grand Rapids, MI
Feb 8	<b>Acton Lecture Series: Dr. Martha Cruz-Zuniga</b>	Grand Rapids, MI
Feb 15	<b>Toward a Free and Virtuous Society Conference</b> <i>Economic Freedom and the American Constitution</i>	Atlanta, GA
Feb 22	<b>Acton Lecture Series: Dr. Greg Forster</b> <i>Division Point: Whittaker Chambers' Witness for the 21st Century</i>	Grand Rapids, MI
Mar 7	<b>2018 Phoenix Dinner</b> Speaker: Rev. Robert Sirico	Phoenix, AZ
Mar 8	<b>Acton Lecture Series: Yuval Levin</b> <i>In Search of Solidarity in the Age of Trump</i>	Grand Rapids, MI
Jun 19-22	<b>Acton University</b>	Grand Rapids, MI