

Notes

March/April Vol. 32 No. 2



Acton University

Back in person in Grand Rapids, Michigan!

A message from our president

Kris Alan Mauren

In our polarized world, the Acton Institute is always seeking to recover a common public reason, which is necessary for respectful dialogue. We do that by looking first to philosophy, natural law reasoning, and to the religious traditions through which such knowledge is transmitted and shaped among people the world over.

Inside this issue you will learn how we are preparing to bring such people together at our flagship conference—Acton University. We are excited to return to hosting this event in person with opportunities for networking

and fellowship as we take a deep dive into the foundations of a free and virtuous society. For those unable to travel, we will continue our robust new practice of offering an array of lectures and other content online.

We recently concluded our Business Matters Conference 2022 and have included here a recap of some of the most interesting talks and key takeaways from that event.

Acton’s interfaith work is also highlighted with a concise introduction to one of our recent publications, *Islam & Economics*. The future of freedom in the wider world depends on a return to the foundational sources of all the world’s religious traditions to help free and virtuous societies take root in a variety of contexts.

Our own nation’s history

was recently explored in the ongoing Acton Lecture Series. Samuel Goldman, associate professor of political science at George Washington University, gave a well-received talk on the question “Are We a Nation?” During an era of increasing political and social polarization, we find in America’s history the essential resources we need to build common ground for a common future.

None of this would be possible without the generous support of our donors. Thank you! Your support is more important than ever as we work to spread the ideas that animate a free and virtuous society. If you are just learning about Acton, be sure to check out our website, and please prayerfully consider supporting us in our mission. **N**

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

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
MAY 19	Lecture Series <i>“Saving and poverty: How savings banks and credit unions help prevent poverty.” This installment will feature the Rev. Dr. Richard Turnbull, director of the Centre for Enterprise, Markets and Ethics. Dr. Turnbull will address how developing a culture of saving is key to poverty prevention, as it encourages self-help, prudence, independence, and personal responsibility. Join us in person or online @ 12 p.m. EST.</i>	Grand Rapids, MI
JUN 20	Acton University 2022 <i>Come build the foundations of freedom and explore the intersection of faith and free markets at Acton University—back in person in Grand Rapids, Michigan!</i>	Grand Rapids, MI
JUL 21	Lecture Series <i>“Herbert Hoover versus the Great Depression.” In this lecture, George H. Nash, senior fellow of the Russell Kirk Center for Cultural Renewal, will examine Hoover’s controversial political career and its significance for today. Join us in person or online @ 12 p.m. EST.</i>	Grand Rapids, MI

Announcing: Acton University coming soon

Andrew Houser

Acton University is back in person in 2022! Acton University is not your typical conference. It's a four-day celebration with hundreds of your newest liberty-loving friends from all over the world. Each day is packed with thought-provoking presentations on the intellectual foundations of a free society. This year you can participate in person and online, with a special curated virtual experience for those who want to engage with Acton University from the comfort of their home.

The momentous times in which we are living, from Russia's invasion of Ukraine to soaring inflation, underscore the importance of examining the principles that lead to creating and sustaining free and virtuous societies that ensure human flourishing. Acton University routinely impacts lives, as past attendee Nelson Obinna Omenuga of Nigeria boldly affirms: "Acton Institute no doubt is the breeding ground for great conscientious leaders."

Here is a sneak peek at some of the invigorating lectures coming up at Acton University 2022:

- ***Principled Entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurship, Creativity, and Faith and Work, Culture***

–By Andreas Widmer

- ***The Sexual State: Identifying and Combatting the Sexual Revolution***

and Other Totalitarian Ideologies

–By Jennifer Roback Morse, Ph.D.

- ***Community and Economic Development***

–By Justin S. Beene, DTL

- ***Black Liberation Through the Marketplace: Hope, Heartbreak, and the Promise of America***


–By Rachel Ferguson, Ph.D.



Featured Speaker:

Victoria Tin-bor Hui, Ph.D.

Victoria Tin-bor Hui received her Ph.D. in political science from Columbia University and her B.S.Sc. in journalism from the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Hui has published multiple scholarly articles, as well as the book *War and State Formation in Ancient China and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2005). Hui testifies on the politics of Hong Kong before Congress and regularly writes for her blog and other media. Hui will be one of the featured plenary speakers on Thursday, June 23.

For more information, or to apply to Acton University 2022, please visit university.acton.org. We look forward to seeing you at the conference! 



FEATURED STORY

Acton hosts Business Matters 2022

Ben Stoner



On February 24, 2022, the Acton Institute hosted Business Matters, its annual conference on business, work, ethics, and faith. The event brought together business leaders and industry experts and was streamed online to a global audience for the second year in a row. Acton’s president and co-founder, Kris Alan Mauren, hosted the conference. Mauren explained how the sessions would address the many challenges facing businesspeople and provide advice on how to “thrive” in the midst of these demanding times.

The first session featured Hannah Stolze, associate professor of supply chain management at Lipscomb University. Stolze addressed the complex challenges facing the global supply chain, explaining how dependent the United States has become on global manufacturing and global supply. Because of this reliance on foreign products, when the COVID pandemic forced companies to lock down, especially in China, product shortages resulted here at home. Stolze later discussed the climbing rates of inflation and then closed with a call to Christians in business to be “good stewards” of their resources.

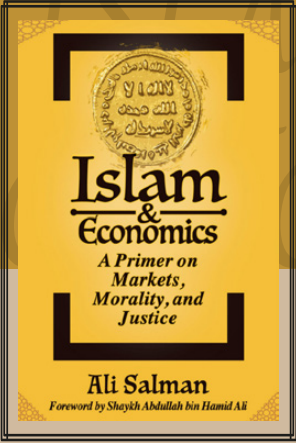
Next, Sarina Sharp, commodities risk manager for Ag Business Solutions, and Collin Duff, head of operations at Stix Golf, an e-commerce golf company, shared how they successfully navigated the pandemic. Sharp

explained how she studied the dairy, feed, and beef markets to help dairy producers use futures and options to hedge their price risk. She also noted how difficult it was to accurately make predictions during the pandemic but relied on her family and faith to persevere.

Later, Duff shared how he started Stix with several friends and then launched at the height of the pandemic. The founders were anxious, wondering what the public’s response would be, but they were “absolutely blown away,” said Duff. Stix’s inventory, which was supposed to last several months, sold out in two weeks. Duff then explained how affordability, aesthetics, and market research were essential to his company’s success. Duff also noted how Stix seeks to create a productive workplace by encouraging employees to pursue other interests and to refresh themselves by taking vacations.

The next session featured a panel discussion on the social responsibility of business. The panel was composed of Michael R. Strain of the American Enterprise Institute, Nathan Bond of the Rifle Paper Co., and Samuel Gregg of the Acton Institute. Anne Rathbone Bradley of The Fund for American Studies served as moderator. The panel focused the discussion on stakeholder capitalism and the major shift in thinking that has taken place among business leaders. Executives who were once primarily concerned with their stakeholders’ satisfaction are now aligning themselves with various social causes to gain the public’s admiration.

The event concluded with Eric Kohn, Acton’s director of marketing and communications, interviewing Mark Murray, former president of Meijer (a supercenter chain in the Midwest). Murray addressed business ethics, how to lead with integrity, and provided candid advice to young people entering the workforce. ■



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This primer explores the principles of commerce and economics revealed in the Qur’an, espoused by the Sunnah (practices of Prophet Muhammad), and understood by the jurists. Islam offers three moral principles of economic organization: ownership, wealth creation, and wealth circulation. From these principles, *Islam & Economics* derives a framework of operational institutional tenets for the economic organization of a society.

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ACTON INSTITUTE

You Tube

Check out the Acton Institute's official YouTube page to watch videos from the Acton Lecture Series.

 <p>ARE WE A NATION? SAMUEL GOLDMAN MARCH 17, 2022 1:00:53</p>	 <p>ACTON INSTITUTE JOHN BURSCH THE FUTURE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN AMERICA 59:17</p>	 <p>ACTON BLACK LIBERATION THROUGH THE MARKETPLACE RACHEL FERGUSON DECEMBER 9, 2021 1:02:48</p>
Are we a nation? with Samuel Goldman	The Future of Religious Liberty in America with Joh...	Rachel Ferguson on Black Liberation Through the...

youtube.com/actoninstitute

Acton releases *Islam & Economics*

Nathan Mech

The Acton Institute's most recent publication, *Islam & Economics: A Primer on Markets, Morality, and Justice* by Ali Salman, is available now. The book is an introductory text that explores the principles of commerce and economics revealed in the Qur'an, espoused by the Sunnah (the traditions and practices of Prophet Muhammad), and understood by the jurists.

Ali Salman is a Pakistan-based economist and public policy expert. He is CEO of the Islam and Liberty Network and executive director of the Policy Research Institute of Market Economy. He previously served as CEO of IDEAS, a prominent think tank in Malaysia. Salman's research brings together important Islamic concepts and economics, presenting them clearly and concisely in *Islam & Economics*. The book has been called "a must-read for anyone looking for a concise insight into Islamic economic thought" and "a whiff of fresh air in an environment of writings on Islamic economics."

Salman explores such topics as Muhammad's teachings on trade, the controversy of interest, and Islamic taxation policy. He argues that Islam offers three moral principles of economic organization that can be used to build a framework of operational institutional tenets for the economic organization of a society. Salman's framework addresses all important business, policy, and equity issues that any economic system should resolve and broadens the discussion on the modern discipline of "Islamic economics." An Arabic edition of the book is forthcoming. **N**

America's National Identity

Sarah Negri

On March 17, Acton welcomed Samuel Goldman, associate professor of political science at George Washington University, to present on the question "Are We a Nation?" as part of the Acton Lecture Series. Goldman began by noting that this "provocative question" is often posed as a way of "decrying the fragmentation and disunity of American life," but that it is "not unique to our times."

Goldman noted that national identity in America does not consist in the usual qualities that define many other nations—for example, common descent, common culture, or common religion. We are a mix of many ethnicities, cultures, and faith traditions, and even our language is not "American." Our bond of unity as a nation, Goldman explained, is actually political; the "American creed" of personal liberty and self-government is what compensates for our lack of ethnic, cultural, or theological consensus. This shared creed serves as the backbone of the "American way of life," which reflects the "lived instantiation of American principles."

Goldman clarified that the "American way of life" has meant very different things in the centuries since America's birth, and historical continuity of its definition is more imagined than real. At its core, however, it hinges on our faithfulness to the responsibility—bequeathed to us by our Founding Fathers—of being "partners in an enterprise whose outcome we cannot clearly discern."

Says Goldman: "We are a nation so long as we accept that inheritance." **N**



ACTON UNIVERSITY

JUNE 20–23, 2022

Come build the foundations of freedom and explore the intersection of faith and free markets with us at Acton University—back in person in Grand Rapids, MI!

APPLY TODAY: [UNIVERSITY.ACTON.ORG](https://university.acton.org)

98 E. Fulton St., Grand Rapids, MI 49503 USA

ACTON

LECTURE SERIES

JOIN US IN PERSON
OR ONLINE

May 19, 2022 • 12:00p.m.



*Rev. Dr. Richard Turnbull, Ph.D.
Director of the Centre for Enterprise,
Markets and Ethics*

“SAVING AND POVERTY: HOW SAVINGS BANKS
AND CREDIT UNIONS HELP PREVENT POVERTY”

Developing a culture of saving is key to poverty prevention, as it encourages self-help, prudence, independence, and personal responsibility. We'll consider how local, self-governed, voluntary savings associations and banks encourage these virtues. We'll also look at some historical examples from Victorian England, reflecting on ideas of locality, self-governance, and self-help. Do trends in the direction of large, national, even global banking institutions best serve these ideals? And what are the implications of the loss of diversity in institutional and local provisions for personal saving? Finally, what does all this tell us about the nature of civil society?

LIVESTREAM @ [ACTON.ORG/LIVE](https://acton.org/live)

Join us live and in person at Acton's Mark Murray Auditorium, or stream this event free from the comfort of your home.