



# The DEFENDANT

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'I have found that humanity is not incidentally engaged, but eternally and systematically engaged, in throwing gold into the gutter and diamonds into the sea. . . ; therefore I have imagined that the main business of man, however humble, is defence. I have conceived that a defendant is chiefly required when worldlings despise the world - that a counsel for the defence would not have been out of place in the terrible day when the sun was darkened over Calvary and Man was rejected of men.'

G.K Chesterton, 'Introduction',  
*The Defendant* (1901)



## The End of the World Again

by Dale Ahlquist

As Holy Week in the Christian calendar approaches, we become conscious once again of the death of Christ. Our thoughts may even take a counter-cultural turn and confront the reality of death itself. **Dale Ahlquist**, President of The Society of Gilbert Keith Chesterton (formerly the American Chesterton Society), offered a timely reflection on this subject in *Gilbert Magazine* (July-August 2019). The article is reprinted with his kind permission.

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**W**e used to keep death close, even stare it in the face: the skull on the desk beside the book, the graveyard right next to the church, crypts under the floors where we knelt.

We kept death close to remind us that we must die. There was a fear of death, but it was a very healthy fear. It made us live better lives. By watching the dead we watched ourselves. By contemplating the mystery of the next life, we took an active interest in the mystery of this life.

"For some strange reason," says G.K. Chesterton, "man must always plant his fruit trees in a graveyard. Man can only find life among the dead."

But he saw us losing our fruitful fear of the morbid. Now we have hidden away our

cemeteries, and, what's more, as Chesterton predicted, we have returned to the pagan habit of cremation. We have scattered our ashes, and the wind has blown away the memory of the dead. We have stopped thinking about the brevity of this life, and in the process have also stopped thinking about the breadth of eternity.

And a strange loss of balance has occurred, even a loss of sanity, which is what happens when there is a loss of mental and spiritual balance.

We used to fear death. Now we fear life instead. We used to fear abnormal things, like sexual perversion and slaughtering babies in the womb. Now we fear normal things, like the weather.

We no longer throw the meaningful shovelful

of dirt on the coffin because now the dirt has become more sacred than the dead. We mutilate our bodies in the most unnatural ways, yet we wring our hands about using too much air or too much water or too much bread. We do not worry that we are destroying our individual homes with adultery and divorce and contraception and abortion, but we are obsessively worried that we are destroying our shared home the earth by turning on lights, growing corn, eating meat, driving cars.

### **Cowering before the climate**

We have grown afraid of the primal and primary tools of civilization—fire and farming and the wheel—because they might interfere with the earth and sky.

We are afraid of the normal, human things because we have forgotten the dead. We don't read them, we don't remember them, and we have forgotten who we are. We have forgotten that we are civilized.

Civilization has always interfered with the forest. As soon as the plow breaks the soil, man declares his supremacy over nature. But now we cower before the climate.

Chesterton says, we can predict the stars, but we cannot predict the clouds. Amazing how he continues to be right about that one. In spite of our sophisticated meteorological equipment, we still can't predict the clouds. We still cannot infallibly forecast sunshine or rain tomorrow.

That of course won't stop us from checking the weather report. It is harmless when planning for a picnic. But it is a grave matter (ha!) when we have chosen to follow into the wilderness the most consistently wrong prophet in all of history: the weatherman.

Here is Chesterton talking about the weather: "On the bright blue day my spirits go slightly down; there seems something pitiless about perfect weather. On the clear cool day, my spirits are normal. In the fog, my spirits go up; it feels like the end of the world, or better still, a detective story."

Paradoxical and profound as expected. Good weather brings him down, bad weather lifts him up. And he sees the end of the world in the weather. He also sees a mystery. The fog is full of riddles. But the finality at a certain point is certain. Now we have the weatherman telling us it's the



*Dale Ahlquist*

end of the world. He is not the first prophet to make this prediction.

Chesterton says, "It is very natural but rather misleading, for supposing that this epoch must be the end of the world because it will be the end of us." And yet, one of these times it will really be the end of the world, even if a wobbly prophet says so.

For the Christian, the final revelation is a good thing, the apocalypse, the unveiling, the solution to the mystery, the explanation not only of all things, but of that most mysterious thing: ourselves.

Chesterton cannot help but anticipate what, in truth, we have all been waiting for: "No men will ever know each other till the end of the world."

But here's a thought. What if the climate change alarmists are absolutely right? And what if we do not heed their warnings? What if we proceed on this path to destruction? What if there is nothing they can do to stop us? What if we are all going to burn up, if not quickly, then slowly and surely? Will those who will have lost their hope about saving the earth have any concern to save their souls? Will they consider Jonah and Nahum and Nineveh? Will anyone ever repent?

Instead of the thundering hoof beats of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, perhaps the Judge will come riding in at a plodding pace, maybe even on a donkey, but without fanfare, without trumpets.

Perhaps he will quietly dismount and silently switch off the lights. The heat will be eternal, but the stars will all go out. Just a thought. ■

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### **Society Membership**

The annual membership fee of the Australian Chesterton Society is **\$30.00**, which entitles subscribers to receive the Society's quarterly newsletter, *The Defendant*.

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# The Homes of Chesterton

Chesterton's first home outside of London, in the rural town of Beaconsfield, has recently been threatened with demolition to make way for the building of an apartment block.

Gilbert and Frances lived in the home, called 'Overroads', from 1909 until 1922, when they moved 'over the road' to 'Top Meadow', the home they built progressively, and in which they lived until Gilbert's death in 1936 – and Frances's in 1938.

The opposition to the demolition of 'Overroads' was both local and international. A residents' group, The Beaconsfield Society, protested on heritage grounds, as did the American-based Society of Gilbert Keith Chesterton, which also argued against the move as being (in the words of its President, Dale Ahlquist), 'an insult to Chesterton's devotees around the world. . . . Letters opposing the destruction of 'Overroads' have come from authors, scholars, politicians, and religious figures.'

K.V. Turley, the UK correspondent for the American *National Catholic Register*, described Chesterton's time at 'Overroads'



'Overroads', the first home of Frances and Gilbert Chesterton in Beaconsfield

as immensely creative. Such books as *The Ballad of the White Horse*, *Manalive*, *Magic* and *The Flying Inn* – to say nothing of the countless essays and journalism – were all written at the house.'

The Beaconsfield authorities have now denied the development application, but 'Overroads' still lacks any official heritage status which would protect it against new attempts at demolition.

The aim of various bodies, both in Beaconsfield and internationally, is now to fight for the property to be recognised as one of historical and cultural significance, at least to the extent that Chesterton's final home, 'Top Meadow', enjoys. ■



*The Foreign Editor of The Australian, Greg Sheridan, photographed in front of Chesterton's home in Warwick Gardens in west London, during his tenure last year as Visiting Fellow at King's College, London. The wall-plaque marks a form of public recognition of Chesterton's residence in London as is now being sought for 'Overroads' in Beaconsfield.*

## Chesterton on Boris Johnson

**W**hile Chesterton is commonly quoted in today's media, it's unusual for him to lead off an article on a prominent political figure.

A recent piece on the British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, by Greg Sheridan (*Weekend Australian*, August 31-September 1, 2019) began with a long excerpt from Chesterton's *Orthodoxy*. It set the tone for an analysis of the vast challenge which Johnson faces in executing Britain's withdrawal from the European Union.

Sheridan cites Chesterton's striking insight into the nature of courage, showing how a person under grave threat must risk his life in order to save it.

"A soldier surrounded by enemies," wrote Chesterton, "if he is to cut his way out, needs to combine a strong desire for living with a strange carelessness about dying.... He must seek his life in a spirit of furious indifference to it; he must desire life like water and yet drink death like wine." ("The Paradoxes of Christianity," *Orthodoxy*, 1908).

Sheridan suggests that, in his pursuit of Brexit, Boris Johnson faces something like

this ultimate dilemma. He "has gambled everything" – not only his own career, but such political imperatives as Britain's future and the relationship with Europe and the US. "This is the moment of truth" for Johnson. "This is do or die. This is the moment of climax in an epic struggle between the rebellious will of the British people, expressed in a referendum and many democratic votes, and the fierce oppressive rule of the whole British establishment that is determined that Britain must not leave the EU, whatever the people say."

In recent months, Sheridan's best-seller on Christianity in Australia, *God Is Good For You*, has been released in the UK and America. It has attracted strong endorsements in both countries.

The renowned British novelist, Piers Paul Read, admired the author's "robust and enlightening defence of religious belief, contrasting the aridity of atheism with the cultural and intellectual riches that accrue from faith." And the American Rod Dreher, author of *The Benedict Option*, appreciated the balance of realistic analysis and hopeful examples which the book contained. ■

# Remembering Two ‘Champions of Chesterton’

## Clive James

by Karl Schmude



The death last November of the Australian expatriate author and broadcaster Clive James (pictured) is an occasion for recalling his admiration of Chesterton. In his collection of essays on major 20th century figures,

*Cultural Amnesia* (2007), James wrote of Chesterton that his output was so vast that “his posthumous reputation is almost impossible to sort out”.

In his pithy way, James said that Chesterton “wrote a lot faster than most of us can read”.

He would have been famous for his Father Brown stories or such novels as *The Man Who Was Thursday*, or for his books of literary criticism (“his monographs on Browning and Dickens are still required reading for serious students of those authors”).

Above all, he would have earned fame for his journalism – “the thing he is least well-known for now” – since his essays “were at the heart of his talent for subversive observation . . . . There are a thousand brilliant sentences to prove that he was the natural opponent of state power in any form, so there can be no real doubt about the stance he would have taken had he lived longer.”

His vice, James thought, “was willful paradox, but his virtue was for asking the awkward questions about current liberal fashions”.

James argued that the books of quotations which cited Chesterton gave undue attention to his poetry, “whereas all his best remarks were in his prose”.

“I saw myself as his champion,” James recalled, and at one time he tried to collect all of Chesterton’s works, which still occupied many cubic feet of his shelves.

“Other journalists feared [Chesterton]”, James believed, “because he was so productive. Mainstream writers feared him because he wrote too well. He was my favourite kind of writer, scaring everybody because he had talent to burn, and no sense of calculation to make his talent decisive. . . . He was serious, always. He just didn’t seem to be.” ■

## William Oddie

A well-known author, William Oddie (pictured), died last November at the age of 80. In 2008, he published an important study of Chesterton, *Chesterton and the Romance of Orthodoxy: The Making of GKC 1874-1908*. From 1998 to 2004, he edited the *London Catholic Herald*.



In this two-part tribute to William Oddie, *The Defendant* publishes a shortened version of the obituary which Francis Phillips, a frequent book reviewer for the *Catholic Herald*, contributed to its issue of November 14, 2019 – and is reprinted with the kind permission of the author and the newspaper’s editor, Luke Coppen. The second feature is a review by Garry Nieuwkamp, a medical doctor and regular contributor to *The Defendant*, of Oddie’s study of Chesterton.

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## Obituary

### *Francis Phillips*

The death of William Oddie will be sad news for his many friends and former colleagues. A large personality in Catholic journalistic circles, his unmistakable voice will be widely missed.

From a Nonconformist background, Oddie graduated from Trinity College Dublin in 1964 and gained a doctorate from Leicester University in 1970. Despite being a self-styled atheist and secular humanist, he and his wife, Cornelia, married in an Anglican church in 1968. Reflecting on this in 2008 in an interview with Marcus Grodi on EWTN, Oddie said: ‘There’s something about a building in which people have been praying for 800 years that gets under your skin somehow.’

The couple began to attend occasional Anglican services. Aged 33, Oddie became a Christian. Given his wholehearted approach to life, he immediately felt called to the Anglican priesthood; given his sense of history and his reverence for ritual, this meant Anglo-Catholicism. He was duly ordained in 1978.

Gradually he came to see that the Anglicanism which he had embraced was flawed. Matters came to a head over the

decision of the Church of England to ordain women. Oddie left before this happened: 'It was a question of authority,' he told Grodi, relating that once, during a celebration of the Eucharist, the question forcibly occurred to him: 'What if the Pope is right?' He was received into the Catholic Church in 1991.

Thereafter, Oddie found his true vocation as a journalist, first as a freelance writer for the national press and then, from 1998, as editor of the *Catholic Herald*. Labelled as a "right-wing traditionalist" by critics, he made it clear on his appointment that he intended to abandon "the inappropriate language of left and right when writing of Church affairs". His editorial policy would be "to support and defend papal authority".

In a tribute to Oddie after he stepped down as editor in January 2004, the present editor [Luke Coppen] described his predecessor as "the best boss I've ever worked for". Defining Oddie's stance as that of "orthodox realism", he suggested that Oddie saw "those who . . . were radically faithful to Catholic tradition" as the "true progressives".

Something of Oddie's approach is contained in his interview with Marcus Grodi: that Catholics should be "subversive" rather than "harmless".

Like St John Henry Newman, whose *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* had been an important influence on his conversion, he was driven by a search for the truth. As he once put it, "A Church that tells the truth will always be unpopular because the truth is often highly inconvenient."

Newman was a religious mentor, as was Pope John Paul II. Yet it was GK Chesterton to whom he felt the closest affinity. He was proud to chair the [UK] Chesterton Society from 2008 to 2016, and wrote in the *Herald* in 2005, for a series on Great Catholic Britons, that for GKC "Catholic truth was a glittering sword liberating the captives of rationalism and the servile state."

In physical size, in polemical energy, in his stances on contemporary affairs and in his sheer exuberance for life, Oddie shared many characteristics of his illustrious forebear in Fleet Street. ■

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## Book Review

### *Garry Nieuwkamp*

**William Oddie, *Chesterton and the Romance of Orthodoxy: The Making of GKC, 1874-1908* (Oxford University Press, 2008)**

I have often wondered what motivates someone to sit down and write an account of another's life.

To walk in another set of shoes or to get inside the head of another is not an easy task. It is time-consuming. The opportunity costs are there to consider, and today there is significant online competition with websites like Wikipedia.

I find it even more curious when the person's life being examined is Chesterton, as so many other people have already walked this biographical path. My first reaction on hearing of another Chesterton biography is to wonder if there is something that we've all missed. Really! We need another? Was Maisie not enough? Ker, Conlon, Coren? Not enough? Chesterton himself? Not enough? My Chesterton bookshelf can only take so much weight. Do I really need another Chesterton biography?

The simple answer is yes, particularly if it is William Oddie's *Chesterton and the Romance of Orthodoxy. The Making of GKC 1874-1908*.

Why has this biography been written?

The first thing to note is that Oddie focuses on only part of Chesterton's life. Like micro histories that are currently in vogue, he concentrates on the years from Chesterton's birth until the publication of *Orthodoxy*. This allows Oddie to focus on Chesterton's intellectual formation.

It is a biography that seeks to trace the evolution of Chesterton's thinking and the ideas that have been influential in this evolution. Along the way Oddie is mindful to correct

some misconceptions, including misconceptions that Chesterton himself has propagated, such as denying knowledge of French despite having won a French prize at school. Tracing the evolution of ideas requires significant forensic skills. It is easy while reading Chesterton to fall into the trap of believing that, like Mr. Bean who materializes fully formed, Chesterton has always been confident and certain of his beliefs. This is clearly not the case and Oddie makes this explicit.

Tracing the elements of Chesterton's intellectual development in the absence of published writing, which only commenced in 1900, requires examination of secondary sources. This is one of the more interesting aspects of Oddie's biography. We have a detailed analysis of Chesterton's notebooks along with a more detailed examination of Chesterton's reading habits. He has read Shelley and Scott and Thackeray and Day. He has read Aytoun and Macaulay, Lytton and Coleridge.

We learn that when his cousin Johannes visited, they talked books - in other words, ideas. We learn of Chesterton's love of Whitman, but from reading the Canterbury Press edition that left out the carnal poems.

He fell under the sway of Stopford Brooke, Henry Scott Holland, Gore and Noel. He fell under the influence of all the 'idiotic ambitions' of the end of the nineteenth century. 'I did, like all our other solemn little boys, try to be in advance of the age. Like them I tried to be some ten minutes in advance of the truth.'

He read Aquinas and Dickens and Browning and Ruskin. We learn from letters to Oldershaw that Chesterton argued positively for Socialism. He denied for a time the divinity of Christ. He argued for the moral purpose of art and saw in the decadent movement the abyss of nihilism staring him in the face. Tracing intellectual development is not an easy task but Oddie achieves this examination with remarkable precision.

The second thing to note is that because Oddie focused on Chesterton's early years as a writer we are privy to an examination of some of Chesterton's major works, including *Heretics* and *Orthodoxy*. This alone makes this Oxford University Press edition of Chesterton's life worth reading. So no - not enough! More please. ■

# Charles Williams - a Chesterton Novel and Sexual Love

by Richard Egan

Charles Williams (1885-1945) was a novelist, poet, playwright, literary critic and theologian.



Charles Williams

His *Outlines of Romantic Theology*, written in 1925 but not published until 1990, seeks to develop insights into orthodox Christianity based on a sustained intellectual reflection on the experience of "the sexual love between a man and a woman, freely given, freely accepted, and appearing to its partakers one of the most important experiences in life - a love which demands the attention of the intellect and the spirit for its understanding and its service".

In a reflection applying the commandment against taking the name of the Lord in vain to how we moderns profane "the name of Love", Williams cites "the gentleman in Mr Chesterton's novel" [Turnbull in *The Ball and the Cross*] who "pronounces the word Love with an indescribable sound of something hard and heavy, as if he were saying 'boots'".

Love, says Williams, should only be mentioned when "something of its own eternal sovereignty is felt to exist". One thinks of the concluding verses of the *Song of Songs* (in regard to which both Williams and John Paul II sought to restore a focus on its direct relevance to sexual love):

*Love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave.  
It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame.  
Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot sweep it away.  
If one were to give all the wealth of one's house for love, it would be utterly scorned.*

## Manichean view of marriage

Williams notes: "The Church has always, not unnaturally, been haunted by a Manicheism which, driven out by dogma, has returned as a vaguer but prevailing influence" which has resulted "in an attitude to marriage that seems to regard it, though officially calling it a sacrament, as in effect nothing much more than a matter of morals."

This brings to mind George Weigel's comment in his biography of St John Paul the Great that the Pope's

*Theology of the Body* "may prove to be the decisive moment in exorcising the Manichean demon and its deprecations of human sexuality from Catholic moral theology".

Manichaeism is a dualistic religion which assigns all the material world, and therefore the body and sex, to the domain of the eternal evil power. While the Catholic Church has always affirmed the essential goodness of matter, and therefore the body and sex, the "Manichean demon" has led, for example, to the view that even in every act of married love there is cause for shame as it is necessarily accompanied by the "fatal adjunct of unwholesome lust" (St Augustine).

Neither Williams nor John Paul II are naïve about the real struggle between lust and love - not least within the marriage relationship.

Williams observes: "it is few lovers whose intimacy with and contemplation of the beloved are entirely free from 'covetousness', and in many it spreads to include all those aspects of her being which were never intended to be theirs".

The only one of John Paul II's weekly discourses on the theology of the body that attracted worldwide mainstream media attention was the discourse in which he observed:

"Lust is a reduction of the pyramid of values that the woman should evoke for the man (and the man for the woman). By means of the look of lust a certain woman begins to exist for a certain man not as a subject of call and personal attraction or as a subject of communion, but exclusively as an object for the potential satisfaction of the sexual desire."

However, both of them declare that overcoming this tendency to lust is "a task that can be carried out and is worthy of man".

Williams describes Romantic theology as a Christology based on "the identification of love with Jesus Christ, and of marriage with his life". Romantic love is "assumed into Him with the rest of manhood, though in a particular and more obviously symbolic manner".

Williams pays homage to Dante as his master and teacher in Romantic Theology. His 1943 work *The Figure of Beatrice* is a masterpiece of literary criticism.

From his first sight of Beatrice in the streets of Florence when he was nine years old, inspiring a vision of Love as a "Lord of terrible aspect" and initiating him into *La Vita Nuova* (the New Life); through his meeting with Beatrice in the Earthly Paradise - "Look, look well; we are, we are indeed Beatrice"; to the consummation of the *Divine Comedy* when Beatrice having conducted him through the



Dante Alighieri (1265-1321)

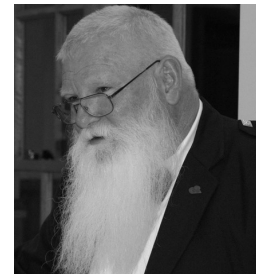
heavenly spheres takes her place once more in the Beatific Rose "at whose heart is 'the Love that moves the sun and all the stars'", Dante presents romantic love as the key to not just comprehending but living the Christian faith.

Dante's vision of the mutual courtesies and exchanges in the Beatific Rose is striving to penetrate the mystery of resurrected, bodily, enfleshed life in the eternity of the Beatific Vision.

Williams' Romantic Theology, as well as his related insights into "substitution" (bear one another's burdens and so

fulfil the law of Christ) and "co-inherence", informs his seven novels.

Each work takes a mysterious phenomenon – for example, the Graal (*War in Heaven*, 1930); the breakout of Platonic types into this world (*Place of the Lion*, 1931); the Tarot (*The Greater Trumps*, 1932) – and reveals that, behind the veil, is that love which became incarnate in Immanuel and is greater than all evil – including sin and death. ■



Richard Egan, a professional researcher and regular contributor to The Defendant

## Chesterton Prophecies on the Sexual Revolution



"The next great heresy is going to be simply an attack on morality; and especially on sexual morality. And it is coming, not from a few Socialists surviving from the Fabian Society, but from the living exultant energy of the rich resolved to enjoy themselves at last, with neither Popery nor Puritanism nor Socialism to hold them back . . . .

"The roots of the new heresy, God knows, are as deep as nature itself, whose flower is the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye and the pride of life. I say that the man who cannot see this cannot see the signs of the times; cannot see even the skysigns in the street that are the new sort of signs in heaven. The madness of tomorrow is not in Moscow but much more in Manhattan - but most of what was in Broadway is already in Piccadilly."

(*G. K.'s Weekly*, June 19, 1926; quoted in Maycock, *The Man Who Was Orthodox: A Selection from the Uncollected Writings of G.K. Chesterton*, ed. By A.L. Maycock, 1963)

"All healthy men, ancient and modern, Western and Eastern, hold that there is in sex a fury that we cannot afford to inflame; and that a certain mystery must attach to the instinct if it is to continue delicate and sane. There are people, indeed, who maintain that they would talk of this topic as coldly or openly as of any other; . . .

"To ask, "Why cannot we discuss sex coolly and rationally anywhere?" is a tired and unintelligent question. It is like asking, "Why does not a man walk on his hands as well as on his feet?" It is silly. If a man walked systematically on his hands, they would not be hands, but feet. And if love or lust were things that we could all discuss without any possible emotion

they would not be love or lust, they would be something else – some mechanical function or abstract natural duty which may or may not exist in animals or in angels, but which has nothing at all to do with the sexuality we are talking about. . . .

"And all that we mean when we speak of 'sex' is involved in the fact that it is not an unconscious or innocent thing, but a special and violent emotional stimulation at once spiritual and physical."

(G.K. Chesterton, "Rabelaisian Regrets," *The Common Man*, 1950)

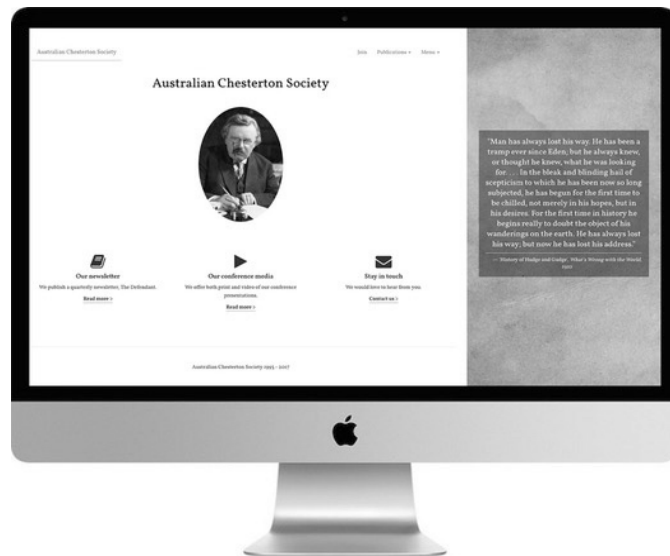
# The Australian Chesterton Website – A Worldwide Audience

by Karl Schmude

The website of the Australian Chesterton Society (<http://chestertonaustralia.com/>) has been operating for four years. Created by Marty Schmude in 2016, it offers an instructive glimpse of the worldwide interest in Chesterton.

Each month the Society receives a report on the use of the site, which, while not revealing the identity of individuals, highlights the nature and spread of enquiries:

- Around 70 per cent are from Australia, followed by up to 20 per cent from the United States, and the remaining 10 per cent from an array of overseas countries. On occasions, these proportions can change significantly – for example, last May, when barely 66 per cent were from Australia while about 30 per cent were North American in origin.
- Australian enquiries are spread across various States, though predominate in the east-coast cities, especially Sydney and Melbourne.
- The reported data indicate, in each instance, the city or suburb as well as the country of origin; so that in recent months, for example, enquiries have come from places as scattered as Dublin (Ireland), Milan (Italy), Quebec (Canada), San Diego (California), Des Moines (Iowa), Brooklyn (New York), St Petersburg (Russia), Sao Paulo (Brazil), Odisha (India), and Tel Aviv (Israel).
- The first recorded enquiry in 2020 came from the city of Fuzhou in the south-eastern province of Fujian in China. Last year there were regular enquiries from Russia – some from Moscow, and others from an outlying suburb of the Russian capital.
- The global Chesterton movement is reflected in local Chesterton societies in many countries, most conspicuously in different parts of the USA, but also in countries throughout the world. These extend beyond English-speaking places where they might be expected (such as England and Ireland – and Australia!), to lands where Chesterton's works would only be available in translation (for example, in Europe – Italy, Spain, France, Norway, Germany and Croatia – and in South America, notably in Brazil and Argentina).
- One regular source of enquiries is the Chesterton Society 'blogspot' in Portugal, and there are local Chesterton societies in unexpected places, such as Sierra Leone in Africa (<https://www.chesterton.org/ptag/sierra-leone/>)
- Many of the 'hits' are a single visit - incidental and brief - but those who stay longer, or return on a number of occasions, tend to focus on two features of the website – past issues of *The Defendant* newsletter and/or



video presentations of papers from the Society's annual conferences each October.

- Most enquirers are directed to the Society's website via a Google search or Facebook, while certain websites serve as the prompt – such as Sydney's Campion College (<https://www.campion.edu.au/>), Tasmania's Christopher Dawson Centre (<https://www.dawsoncentre.org/>), Perth's Christopher Dawson Society (<http://dawsonsociety.com.au/>), and internationally, The Society of Gilbert Keith Chesterton, formerly the American Chesterton Society (<https://www.chesterton.org/>), and *The Chesterton Review* (<https://www.shu.edu/chesterton/chesterton-review.cfm>).

The website continues to be updated – with the latest issue of *The Defendant* normally made available a month after its distribution to members. Most recently, the papers delivered at the 2019 Australian Chesterton Conference at Campion College have been uploaded, both in text and video forms.

Occasionally a significant news item is provided – for example, an obituary of Fr Paul Stenhouse MSC, the long-serving and esteemed Editor of *Annals*, who was a great devotee of Chesterton and consistently promoted, in the pages of *Annals*, an interest in his thought, publishing articles and book review and including quotations, in highlighted boxes, from his works.

The great value of the website is the extent to which it reaches out to a global readership. But it has also proved to be a helpful source for members – especially new members – wishing to consult back issues of *The Defendant* or watch conference presentations they may have missed. ■