



The DEFENDANT

Newsletter of the Australian Chesterton Society

Vol. 31 No. 1

Summer 2024

Issue No. 120

'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 Spiritual Importance of Place In Memory of an American Chestertonian

by Karl Schmude

Two years have passed since Gerald Russello died at the early age of 50 in New York City.

Gerald was, by profession, a corporate lawyer in a New York firm, but his broader reputation was as a 'man of letters'. He contributed to various journals, including the *Chesterton Review* (published by the Chesterton Institute at Seton Hall University, of which he was a Fellow).

A special achievement was his editorship of the Russell Kirk Center's book review journal, *The University Bookman*. I had the good fortune of publishing in the *Bookman* at different times, sending reviews of mainly Australian books, including the beautiful autobiography of Les Murray's wife, Valerie, *Flight from the Brothers Grimm: A European-Australian Memoir* (2016), to which Gerald gave the evocative heading, "From Hungary to the Outback".

We met in New York in 2018. Our conversation brought home to me the deep connection Gerald had with Chesterton, as well as with the cultural historian Christopher Dawson (a selection of whose writings he brought together in the book, *Christianity and European Culture*, 1998). He realised why Chesterton and Dawson stressed the cultural importance of spiritual roots, and the ways in which a people's inner life finds expression and embodiment in a particular place.

For Christians – and Gerald was a man of deep and learned Catholic faith - God consecrates the material realities of ordinary life, including particular places. As a native New Yorker, born and raised in the working-class borough of Brooklyn, across from the cosmopolitan centre of the city, Manhattan, he did not think he lived in "God's country" (as he liked to call Brooklyn). He knew it.



Gerald Russello

At that time Brooklyn was made up of close-knit ethnic neighbourhoods – in Gerald's case, Irish and Italian Catholic families and a small Jewish community. In a recent tribute on the second anniversary of Gerald's death, a boyhood friend, Gerard T. Mundy, captured the significance of their shared upbringing in a cherished place, and how it had formed their identity:

"Being from the neighbourhood meant mutual bonding, protection, and an unspoken understanding of one another's experiences. . . a certain sort of kinship. . . . Saying that he was . . . from Brooklyn, and from the City of New York, were not verbal demarcations of some arbitrary markers or boundaries – for Gerald, it was saying 'here is who I am.'" (Kirk Center, November 5, 2023).

As James Matthew Wilson has written about the memories of his home state of Michigan, the good things there are precious, "not because they are universally great but because they are particularly ours." He sees his native Michigan as "eternal", in the same way as the French Catholic poet Charles Péguy saw his beloved France – as "the historical place where the eternal was made manifest."

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All this testifies to what Chesterton called the “mystery of locality”.

But that mystery has now dissipated in the 21st century. As Gerard Mundy points out, identities now largely reside elsewhere. In an age of identity politics, they relate to race and gender rather than place.

This represents a decisive shift in self-understanding - away from physical roots and recognisable connections and, incidentally, less alive to social class that has usually been linked with place as a definer of identity. It marks the growing rootlessness of Western culture, which has become spiritually disconnected and socially fragmented, and is now in a state of continuing upheaval - lurching from one form of self-definition to another.

The Infinite in the Finite

Chesterton emphasised place as where infinity finds expression in the finite. A place, he wrote, is “some strange spot where the sky touches the earth, or where eternity contrives to live on the borderland of time and space.” (“Concerning a Strange City,” *The Common Man*, 1950)

While spiritual longings may be “vague and universal,” spiritual events are specific and parochial. They occur in definite spaces and at particular times – as, in the Catholic tradition, in the apparitions of Mary at places like Lourdes (1858) and Fatima (1917) and Czestochowa (1920), proclaiming anew Christ’s abiding message of repentance and hope.

In 1920, Chesterton and his wife Frances made a three-month visit to the Holy Land. In a subsequent book, *The New Jerusalem*, he dwelt more fully on the spiritual meaning of place – of the mystery of the infinite finding a home in the finite.

What can seem an abstraction becomes an actuality. Chesterton thought that ordinary people quietly realised that “holy things could have a habitation and that divinity need not disdain the limits of time and space.” (*The Everlasting Man*, 1925).

For this reason, he was uneasy with what is now termed in our online age the *global citizen*, who identifies with many places but belongs nowhere; engaging in a life of perpetual travel – at least virtually - where mere movement can be mistaken for progress.

As early as 1905, Chesterton criticised the fellow writer, Rudyard Kipling, as a cosmopolitan, a “philanderer of the nations”, as it meant a lack of attachment to any community or cause.

Kipling, wrote Chesterton, was “a man of the world, with all the narrowness that belongs to those imprisoned in that planet.” He can admire many places but balks at

Right: The Australian’s *Foreign Editor*, Greg Sheridan, noticed this *English Heritage* plaque marking Chesterton’s family home, when he was walking through the suburb of Kensington on a visit to London in 2019.



loving any of them – for, in Chesterton’s mind, “we admire things with reasons, but love them without reasons.”

Pantheism and particularism – a place to call home

The global citizen might be seen as the social equivalent of the philosophy of pantheism.

Pantheism identifies God with everything - but nothing in particular. The paradox of the theory of pantheism, as Chesterton noted, is that it yearns for particularism: “people everywhere are beginning to wish they were somewhere.”

The global citizen, bereft of roots, is beset by longings for a place he can call home.

Gerald Russello regretted that this paradoxical condition marked present-day Brooklyn. It had ceased to be the working-class district of his youth, and had become the haven of a mobile upper middle class – “full of hipsters, bond traders, and actors, as well as actors and hipsters who are the children of bond traders, all searching for an ‘authentic’ place to replace the Midwestern suburbs and rural towns they came to Brooklyn to escape.” (“Leaving Brooklyn,” *First Things*, April 2013)

A similar pattern has become characteristic of our Australian cities. Traditional working-class suburbs, such as Balmain and Glebe in Sydney, or Carlton and Footscray in Melbourne, are now gentrified. They are accessible only to those on high incomes who enjoy high salaries and guaranteed employment, usually government-employed or else dependent on government contracts – in law or health or education or IT. These areas have ceased to be a home for the ordinary working-class and for families, who have been banished to the outer suburbs, often remote from their workplace.

Gerald Russello’s intellectual outlook was informed by a profound sense of place and its importance in forming the life of communities. He brought this outlook to bear in his family, and in his vocation as a writer and editor. In the touching and true words of Gerard Mundy:

“In a dark world, there are small lights; those small lights try to keep the good alive for others so that others may have a chance to seek it. Gerald was one of those lights in this world.”_■



A Classic Magazine for Women

by Veronika Winkels

A new magazine that is both traditional and radical in its approach - and published in a printed form that exemplifies careful design and inspiring beauty - is a rare event. The Founding Editor of *Mathilde* magazine, **Veronika Winkels** (pictured), explains the reasons for this unusual venture. (Subscribe at: www.mathildemagazine.com)

This article was first published by the Australian Classical Education Society (<http://www.classicaleducation.org.au/>), whose President is Kon Bouzikos, and is reprinted with the Society's kind permission.

Wandering into a newsagent today you will find magazines covering fishing, motorbikes, science, politics, history, new technologies, and more. But the monopoly is still held by what are generally described as 'women's interests': rows of publications about weddings, cake decorating, craft, health, and, of course, celebrity gossip.

How then, could any woman still see a gaping hole? Because there is one—where a publication dedicated to the philosophical and cultural contributions of, and impact on, women ought inhabit.

So, while we have copious amounts of magazines on weddings, we have none on the wisdom of the past; on food and fashion but not philosophy; on pop culture but not high culture.

What have women done to deserve this neglect? Is it simply that no one thought Klimt or Kant would appeal to a female audience so much as the Kardashians? Perhaps that was the safer bet. Alternatively, believing women *would* be interested in engaging in such conversations as how we might relate to Homer's *Odyssey*, or how Wollstonecraft can still guide women today, was the greater risk. We took it.

Mathilde (pronounced 'Matilda' and meaning 'battle-maiden') is dedicated to protecting the endangered species of age-old wisdom, the pursuit of excellence, and celebration of art and culture at a time when expediency, technology, and radical individualism occupy the popular imagination as the highest good.

In the face of cancel culture, *Mathilde* seeks to create a space to explore ideas that may or may not fall within accepted narratives about women, culture, and history, in a continual search for truth rather than a naïve belief in the triumph of progress. Anchored in the belief of women's distinct, inimitable, and irreducible value; we aim to encompass this with the term 'reclaimed feminism'.

A mission that has everything to do with the Liberal Arts.

The irony is that, while six of my nine siblings attended Australia's first and still-only Liberal Arts college, Campion College, I elected not to, instead opting to undertake a Bachelor of Arts at Melbourne University, perhaps the nation's hottest hotbed of the type of deconstructivism and secular humanism.

Why would an immersion in the alternate world of queer theory and feminist studies seem more appealing to me? Arts at Melbourne University was an education, if not in the way it sought to achieve. But as the injunction to "hold fast to what is good" is preceded by the equally important one to "test everything", I felt I had to both test the strength of my love for the Classics and my conviction of their importance, by placing myself in an environment where I would need to defend them.

I wanted to see which world would present itself as the more attractive: one untethered from history, in a perpetual state of self-actualization, or in one which is built upon the ages, which in the words of Isaac Newton, accepted it could see so far because "it stood on the shoulders of giants."

Perhaps it simply came down to indolence. I couldn't be bothered with a philosophical outlook which demanded me to reinvent the wheel all over again. I was just happy to learn about the roads it has since traveled, and can travel still. This does not mean that ideas such as those about women and very many other things have been 'settled.' The beauty of a wheel is that it keeps on turning.

To complete the irony of not attending Campion College, I gave an address at the 2023 Chesterton Conference which was held there, to discuss my complex, but ultimately companionable relationship with its namesake.

The theme for that conference was 'The Rise of a Counter-culture.' Indeed, Australia has been showing signs of a growing interest in a new cultural springtime, as increasing enrolments at Campion College, and the growing adoption of Classical curriculums in schools, both secondary and primary, around the country show.

This is an act of hope, and confidence.

Like founding a magazine. ■

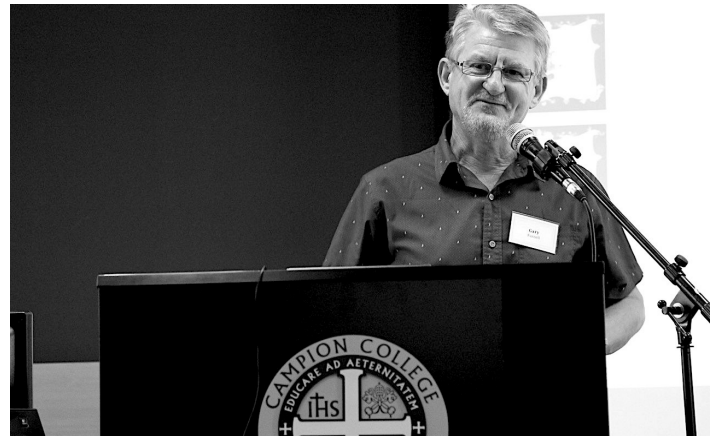


Changes in Funeral Customs

Reflections of an undertaker's assistant

by Gary Furnell

In his recent work as an undertaker's assistant, **Gary Furnell** (pictured) has observed the cultural and religious changes that are reflected in funeral customs in Australia. Gary is a frequently published contributor to *Quadrant*, *News Weekly* and other journals, as well as serving as the Australian Chesterton Society's Secretary-Treasurer.



Family, Friends, Home

What eulogies consistently reveal is that, overwhelmingly, most lives very sensibly revolve around family, friends and home.

We may love a sport, our bank account, hobby, club, political affiliation or our work, but it's our family and friends that we particularly cherish. And we are most ourselves at home with our loved ones; at home we have the greatest freedom to express ourselves. Women — *very generally speaking*, family builders — seem to possess the good sense to value intimate blood relationships more overtly than men. But the wise predilection to treasure close relationships — above everything else — is common.

It's also common that people build relationships with unequal skills. At a funeral it's a delight to see family and friends pleased to see each other as they gather to mourn. Little cousins cheerfully greet each other; kisses and lasting hugs are exchanged among adults; grief is expressed and then consoled with sincere solicitude. Tenderness is shown to the elderly and those deeply bereaved. Functional families dress with appropriate care showing they understand the importance of a dignified occasion.

Dysfunctional families are not a delight. Men dress slovenly as if they've rushed to the funeral from working under the car, from the pub, or the beach. They walk in and out of the funeral to have a smoke. Too many young women seem to think the clothes fit for night-clubbing are the right clothes for a funeral.

Unfortunately, funeral directors may be required to separate families because they're quarrelling and can't contain their ill will. Eulogies can become an occasion for vulgarities and tension rather than consolation and celebration.

For some, honouring the dead appears a trivial matter: they arrive at a funeral with a takeaway coffee or a Red Bull to slurp during proceedings.

There's a widespread lack of knowledge about good funeral customs. I'll be teaching my children those good customs, particularly if they plan to come to my funeral. At that time I hope the coroner — finding remnants of a chocolate éclair and cappuccino in my belly — will have concluded: "He died happy." ■

Prayers and Poems

Changes in our society — in particular, secularisation — are reflected in funeral customs.

For example, only a generation or two ago in Australia, nearly everyone knew the Lord's Prayer even if they never went to church. It was part of our culture. Not anymore. The Lord's Prayer is still included in many funerals but, if it isn't written in the order of service, most people can't recite it.

When I assist at funerals, I often notice younger mourners glancing with wonder at older mourners who can say the prayer from memory. That memory was never given to those young people, and they're poorer for its absence, disconnected in one more way from their cultural heritage.

In contrast, the heritage of rhyming verse stubbornly persists at funerals. Poems, always with pulse and rhyme, are often featured during services. Unrhymed, unmetred verse is seldom heard. This may disappoint the modernists, but when people want solemnity — to honour the dead and the deeply loved — they instinctively choose poems with rhyme and rhythm.

The poetry may not be great (more often it's close to doggerel), but it satisfies a real need which free verse doesn't satisfy. Lovers and mourners share this preference for traditional forms of poetry, possibly because those who mourn and those who love are the same people.

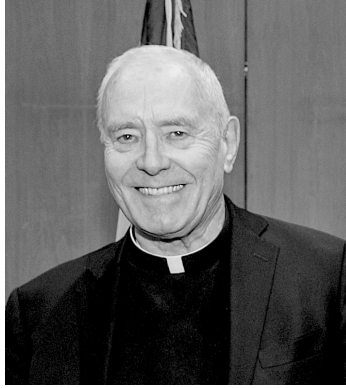
The poems at funerals are an attempt to capture — in some way — the mystery of another person's life.

Eulogies are likewise an attempt to capture the mystery of a life. The focus is frequently on obvious aspects: the deceased loved their garden, their family, their mates, their footy side, their fishing or holidays. But the complex *inner* life of another person is largely closed to anyone except that particular person. This is true of us all. We're a mystery to other people because we're mostly a mystery to ourselves.

Fr Ian Boyd RIP - Tribute to a Chesterton Founder

by Karl Schmude

The Australian Chesterton Society shares the sadness of the worldwide Chesterton community in learning of the death of Fr Ian Boyd on January 10, 2024, just two weeks short of his 89th birthday.



Fr Ian Boyd

A Canadian by birth, a Basilian priest by vocation, and a Chestertonian by mind and heart, Fr Boyd played a founding role in the modern revival of Chesterton studies.

In 1974, the centenary year of Chesterton's birth, he established the G.K. Chesterton Institute for Faith & Culture and also launched the journal, *The Chesterton Review*, initially at St Thomas More College, a Catholic liberal arts college federated with the University of Saskatchewan in Canada, and later at Seton Hall University in the American state of New Jersey.

Fr Boyd used both these platforms, the Institute and the *Review*, to cultivate a global audience for Chesterton. For the first time this embraced professional scholars as well as devoted lay readers, and resulted in a fresh appreciation of Chesterton in university circles.

Under his editorship, *The Chesterton Review* built up an enviable reputation for impressive scholarship combined with readability. It has consistently demonstrated Chesterton's international appeal, attracting contributors from many countries.

Fr Boyd also organised conferences in every continent. At his invitation, I visited Buenos Aires in 2006, to speak at a

conference attended by several hundred delegates. The then-Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio (now Pope Francis), owned several books by Chesterton and served on the committee arranging the conference on behalf of the Argentine Chesterton Society. He encouraged those seeking to initiate Chesterton's cause for canonisation, and he approved a private prayer for that purpose.

In all his work for the Chesterton Institute and the *Review*, Fr Boyd was greatly assisted by Dr Dermot Quinn, who succeeded him as the *Review's* Editor in 2020, and by Gloria Garafulich-Grabois, a native of Chile who has long been the Institute's Director and the *Review's* Managing Editor, and played a key part in developing foreign language editions of the journal, especially for Spanish-speaking readers.

The Chesterton movement in Australia has particular cause for gratitude to Fr Boyd. He welcomed Australian Chestertonians to the pages of the *Review* - such as Tony Evans, founder of the Australian Chesterton Society, and Gary Furnell - and invited others, such as Race Mathews, Peter Hunt and Karl Schmude, to contribute articles and serve on the *Review's* Editorial Board.

Over many years, he reprinted articles from our Australian quarterly, *The Defendant*, a generous practice of sharing a local love of Chesterton with an international community, which has continued under Dermot Quinn's editorship.

Fr Boyd visited Australia on two occasions - in 1990 when he met with various Chesterton Society members, and again in 2000, when he spoke at the conference that broadened the Chesterton Society of W.A. - founded by Tony Evans in 1993 - into a national Chesterton Society.

His Canadian roots undoubtedly fostered a sense of connection with Australia, sharing the same historical origins as his homeland. As he remarked on the Australian Chesterton Society's 25th anniversary:

"Having a chance to visit Australia gave me a better sense of what membership in the commonwealth meant, but more importantly it gave me an excellent example of what a Chestertonian fellowship means." (*The Defendant*, Summer 2019) ■

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Layout of 'The Defendant' designed by Jenna Fulop

Society Membership

The annual membership fee of the Australian Chesterton Society is **\$35.00**, which entitles subscribers to receive the Society's quarterly newsletter, *The Defendant*.

Donations are always welcome.

Subscriptions may be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer, Mr Gary Furnell, at the address in the adjacent box or by electronic transfer -

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A Chesterton Collection in London - at an American University



Chris Rule (centre) with his wife Maree (right) and the Chesterton Collection Curator, Alice Tyrell

by Chris Rule

A comprehensive collection of Chesterton books and memorabilia is now available in London. **Chris Rule**, a frequent writer of articles and book reviews for News Weekly, and a Canberra-based member of the Australian Chesterton Society, provides a revealing picture of the collection which he and wife, Maree, saw on a recent visit to London.



Aidan Mackey

In September 2023, my wife, Maree, and I visited the G. K. Chesterton Collection at Notre Dame University in Suffolk Street, London. We were shown around the collection by Alice Tyrell, the curator of the collection.

The collection was established by Aidan Mackey, a noted Chesterton expert, and had been housed previously at the Centre for Faith and Reason at Oxford, and then at the Oxford Oratory. It came under the control of Notre Dame, London in 2022.

According to the Notre Dame London Global Gateway website, the collection consists of: “[A] research collection of writings by and about Chesterton, a library of related material, as well as a number of personal items”.

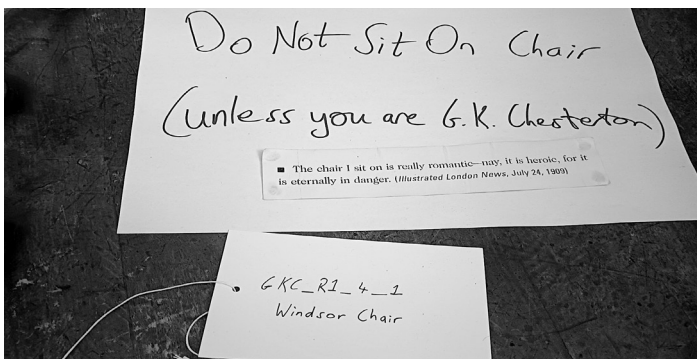


Corona typewriter used by Dorothy Collins, Chesterton's secretary taking his diction

The personal items included a desk/table, typewriters, artwork by Chesterton used for his puppet plays, childhood sketches, diaries, a photo of Chesterton and his rosary beads, both framed. There was also a sketch of him dated March 12, 1922; and a school Latin book to which Chesterton had added copious notes and little sketches. As well there was his personal library of books by other

authors. The diaries included not only appointments, but, also, records of those requests for a visit which he had refused.

Furthermore, there was a collection of copies of Chesterton's published works including those which had been published



in foreign languages. These had been presented to him by the publishers.

The day we visited, a family of six adults from the Philippines was shown around with us. They had come to England as a birthday present for the patriarch of the family who had just turned 85 on that day. They had also visited Beaconsfield to see Chesterton's house and his grave, showing that it is not only people of the Anglosphere who are impressed by Chesterton.

At the moment, there are no official tours of the collection for the public, but it is possible to arrange a visit by contacting london@nd.edu.

The curator, Alice Tyrell, was informative, mentioning the plans that Notre Dame London has for the collection, particularly to raise money to enable the collection to be conserved and then expanded. Ultimately, the focus of the collection is Chesterton-related research. ■

Francis Phillips, a long-time book reviewer for the Catholic Herald (London), marked the Season of Advent leading up to Christmas by writing this poem especially for The Defendant.

A tribute to G.K. Chesterton

by Francis Phillips

How much we need him now, in this late age
This age of lies, half-truths and obfuscation
How much we miss this large and genial sage
When common sense is mislaid in translation.

His paradoxes, packed with sanity,
Provocative of mischief, merriment;
Those squibs aimed at all pompous vanity
A man of insight – and yet innocent.

He was prophetic of our darkened times,
When all the values that we hold most dear
Have been upturned; and slogans, new hate crimes
Proliferate. We dread to speak out. Fear.

Let's keep his words, that trenchant voice, alive
And imitate his courage. Then we'll thrive.

The Perennial Wisdom of St Thomas Aquinas

by John Young



Donald Boland

The Australian Catholic philosopher, Dr Donald G. Boland, has completed a monumental series of works, comprising 12 volumes, on St Thomas Aquinas. In this review, **John Young**, the Melbourne-based philosopher and a frequent contributor to *The Defendant*, reviews two of the most recent volumes, *Science, Psychology and St Thomas Aquinas* and *Thomas of the Creator*.

Further details on the series, including ordering information, is available at: <https://enroutebooksandmedia.com/ordering/>



John Young

The importance of the matters dealt with in these two works is clear from a glance at the topics.

The first volume, *Science, Psychology and St Thomas Aquinas*, provides a clear explanation of the thought of Aristotle and St Thomas Aquinas and its relevance today. Focusing on the human person, it discusses the external senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell; then the internal senses. After this, human intellect and will are discussed.

This reflects the common discussion among philosophers today about the crucially important question of the nature of the cognitive powers, and their reliability in manifesting to us the world in which we live.

The author, Dr Donald Boland, has a doctorate in philosophy from the Angelicum University in Rome, and before that studied for some years at the Aquinas Academy in Sydney. The Academy was founded by Dr Austin Woodbury SM, an outstanding exponent of the theology and philosophy of St Thomas. I heard one student who had studied under Dr Woodbury say: "We have seen a genius at work." He was right.

Donald Boland is one of the many who benefitted from Dr Woodbury's teaching. He has written and lectured on philosophy for many years.

Science, Psychology and St Thomas Aquinas is an exposition of philosophical psychology as expounded by Aristotle and further developed by St Thomas. Philosophical psychology deals with the nature of knowledge and what this shows us about the nature of man. How far does our knowledge go? Have we free will? What is the human person?

Having discussed these questions as expounded by Aristotle and further developed by Aquinas, Dr Boland goes on to consider modern psychology in the light of Aristotelian and Thomistic thought.

The second volume, *Thomas of the Creator*, deals with the Five Ways of proving the existence of God, famously expounded by Aquinas, and discusses what these Five Ways tell us about the nature of God.

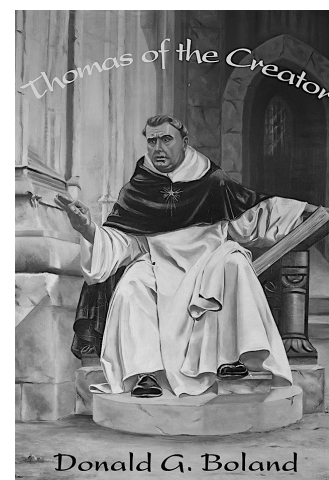
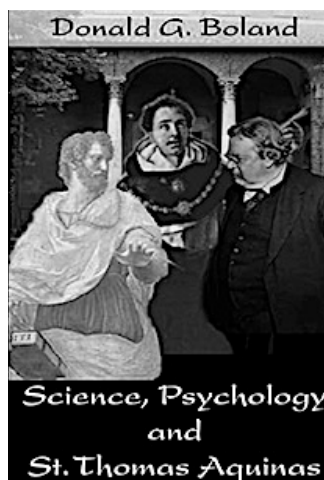
These questions are relevant in any age, but it is particularly important today that they should be understood and that their intellectual strength should be seen. This work does that very well.

The enormous advances of physical science in modern times compared with earlier ages can lead to the assumption that the philosophy of Aristotle is outdated. That is not correct, and anyone reading this book should see that the perennial philosophy, developed through the ages until the present time, does not depend on ancient science.

Some people avoid philosophical works on the assumption that they are too difficult. That is a pity, because it does not apply to all such works. These two books are clearly written, and the average person with an interest in the subject is quite capable of following the arguments.

The existence of God, for example, can be established beyond doubt by the application of self-evident principles and by facts known to all of us through our senses. But many people who have studied philosophy would think that statement to be nonsense, for they are not familiar with the Aristotelian and Thomistic philosophical tradition and the strength of that tradition.

The topics are well presented in clear type, though would be improved by the addition of an index. I hope this can be added in future editions. ■



A Chesterton Political Party in America?

by Karl Schmude

An inescapable feature of present-day politics in the West is the fragmentation of traditional political culture. It is marked most clearly by the continuing rise of minor parties as the popular support for major parties wanes.

A growing proportion of people are feeling politically homeless. The primary vote of the usual two major parties – for example, in the USA, Democrat and Republican, and in Australia, Labor and Liberal - continues to shrink.

While the system of proportional representation has one advantage, that of spreading political representation and encouraging movements with a sharper focus on certain causes, it carries the disadvantage of weakening the political coherence and focus of the nation, and often giving crucial decision-making power to distinctly minority voices.

In recent years, one positive response to this trend has occurred in America. It is the political emergence of the **American Solidarity Party (ASP)** - <https://www.solidarity-party.org/>.

Inspired by the principles of Christian democratic movements in Europe, it reflects Chesterton's social and economic philosophy of Distributism and family values. Founded in 2011, the ASP is a national political party, with state and local chapters reflecting its grassroots origins and connections. It promotes policies which cross the current political Left-Right divide. It challenges the social and political polarisation now usually associated with the major parties.

On social issues, the ASP is pro-life and pro-family. On economic issues it favours distributism and the spreading of ownership and power. It supports small businesses, and seeks to foster the creation of worker co-operatives – such as credit unions – and most famously in the Mondragon Corporation in Spain.

Concentration – vs - Distribution of wealth and power

The philosophy of distributism stands in sharp contrast to the concentration of wealth and power in our time – both in large corporations (including those of Big Tech – of Google and Amazon and Facebook – as well as of Big Business) and, increasingly, in the manifold and ever-growing agencies of government.



Mike Johnson - Speaker of the House, US Parliament

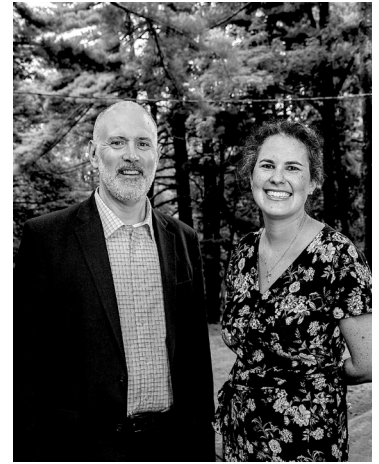
US Congressional Leader quotes Chesterton

In his first speech as the new Speaker of the US House of Representatives, Mike Johnson (Republican - Louisiana) quoted a familiar Chesterton statement about America as "the only nation in the world that is founded on a creed."

This is "set forth with dogmatic and even theological lucidity in the Declaration of Independence; perhaps the only piece of practical politics that is also theoretical politics and also great literature. It enunciates that all men are equal in their claim to justice, that governments exist to give them that justice, and that their authority is for that reason just." (*What I Saw in America*, 1922)

As the ASP proposes on its website:

"The American Solidarity Party believes that political economy is a branch of political ethics, and therefore rejects models of economic behavior that undermine human dignity with greed and naked self-interest. We advocate for an economic system which liberates people from being cogs in a pitiless machine, instead creating a society of widespread ownership, or distributism."



Peter Sonski and Lauren Onak

For the US Presidential election later this year, the ASP has put forward Peter Sonski from Connecticut. His professional background is in journalism, public relations, insurance and business administration.

He argues for tax credits and incentives that support ordinary families - such as living wages, affordable housing, quality medical care, and educational opportunities – and he is an advocate for local businesses that underpin a broad ownership economy.

His running mate for Vice-President is Lauren Onak from Florida. She has university degrees in literature and adolescent education, and is a working-at-home mother with three young children who is also active in various community organisations.

There are roughly 50 minor political parties in America, and the ASP is at this stage fledgling, reliant overwhelmingly on volunteer support, and active in only a few states such as California, Texas, and Ohio.

Its Board of Advisers includes Joseph Grabowski, Vice-President of Evangelisation and Mission for the Society of Gilbert Keith Chesterton (of which Dale Ahlquist is President), and its emergence in America is a timely expression in the political arena of many of Chesterton's ideas. ■

"My own political philosophy is very plain and humble; I can trust the uneducated, but not the badly educated."

- G.K. Chesterton (*Daily News*, May 15, 1909)
