May 15, 2006

Dear Editor, Reporter, News Director or Producer:

Here are two new books on one of the most memorable and prolific 20th-century Christian literary figures, G.K. Chesterton, which will hit home with audiences – especially now.

In spite of all the very public problems the Catholic Church is having, many see a Catholic revival taking place in its midst. Gilbert Keith Chesterton was a major player and communicator as part that revival, which by the way, he catalyzed beginning nearly a century ago.

The Autobiography of G. K. Chesterton (Ignatius) is the best account of the doubts and darkness of his youth, and of his conversion to Christianity and eventually to Catholicism. “Along the way, he paints literary portraits of friends and relatives (especially his father) who played important roles in his life,” says Dale Ahlquist, president of the American Chesterton Society and author of Ignatius Press’ other new-release on Chesterton.

“In Chesterton’s autobiography,” says Fr. Randall Paine in the Introduction to the book, “he turns to himself” in revealing to the reader his experiences, views, faults, shortcomings and even gratitude to God. Chesterton’s other famed writings use various genres to make their civil or moral points; in this book he finally turns to himself.

Ahlquist, who has hosted three television series about Chesterton and spends most of his professional time writing and speaking about the man, wrote the bestseller several years ago, G.K. Chesterton: The Apostle of Common Sense (Ignatius). He also served as editor of the book on the epic Chesterton poem, Lepanto (Ignatius).

In his latest book on Chesterton – Common Sense 101: Lessons From G. K. Chesterton (Ignatius) – Ahlquist says it is not intended to be about Chesterton. But rather it’s an attempt to look at the world through Chesterton’s eyes. Ahlquist emphasizes, “In my thematic approach, I present some of the main topics that are key to Chesterton’s faith and philosophy – most importantly, wonder and paradox.

“Then, on the way to bigger topics like the Catholic faith and love and marriage” in the book, says Ahlquist, “I deal with art, literature, history, science, education, journalism, economics – even fads and fashions.” He also presents Puritanism, Paganism and Feminism through Chesterton’s eyes. It is much more in-depth than other books or writings by Chesterton in which he may make passing references to these things, says Ahlquist. “This [Common Sense 101] is much more intense – Chesterton in heavy doses.”

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“A true revival touches on everything, not just what happens on Sunday,” says Ahlquist. He says this means a renewed interest in classic art, literature, a wider perspective of historical and social events. Chesterton is one of the very few writers who was truly a “generalist” as opposed to a “specialist,” according to Ahlquist. “The world is growing weary of specialists who know more and more about less and less,” says Ahlquist. “Chesterton has a way of informing every other discipline. He is ripe for re-discovery!”

Please consider coverage of these very insightful accounts on G. K. Chesterton. If you would like an interview with Dale Ahlquist, please contact me.

Yours very sincerely,

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