

A Christmas 2021 Global Renaissance Manifesto:
A Collaborative Call for a World Cultural
Renaissance through
Establishment of a Global Commonsense
Solidarity Union (GCSU)

Preamble

The following Signatories communicate online this Christmas Day of the year 2021 to affix our signatures to the following Manifesto marking the temporal starting point of *a World Historical Moment* calling for a humanist rebirth of cultural common sense and opposition to growing world cultural and political totalitarianism and denial of traditional civil liberties and natural human rights.

We consider what we do today to be issuing a formal document starting, on a global scale, a Cultural Renaissance that analogously continues previous humanist cultural rebirths which have occurred within the West, such as: the great Philosophical Renaissance Thales, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle had caused among the ancient Greeks; the revolutionary, early Theological Renaissance initiated in the West by St. Augustine and Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius; and continued by Christian Encyclopedists Martianus Capella, Cassiodorus, and Isidore of Seville; the great work of the Venerable Bede and Carolingian Renaissance scholars like Alcuin and Rabanus Maurus and English and Irish monastic copyists; followed by the work of 12th-century monastic and cathedral schools and the 13th-century European University Renaissance, which culminated in the masterful teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas; and was continued by the most famous of all Western cultural rebirths: the Italian Renaissance of the 14th century, issued in by the great Dante Alighieri, Francesco Petrarca (Petrarch), and the Italian humanist movement; and, finally, the Modern and Enlightenment Renaissances spearheaded by René Descartes, Immanuel Kant, and Georg Hegel. At some historical point, each of these Renaissances reached an extreme of cultural decay, loss of common sense; and, for the common good of the people living at the time, had to be succeeded by another cultural rebirth. We have reached that point today, but globally. Hence, the need for us to issue this historic Manifesto to inaugurate a commonsense World Cultural Renaissance.

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Introduction: Why a Need Presently Exists for a Global Cultural Renaissance and a Global Commonsense Solidarity Union (GCSU):

Whether liberal, conservative, or of some other political persuasion, well known to anyone with political common sense is that the contemporary world is increasingly becoming subjected to arbitrary totalitarian political mandates that fly in the face of the exercise of traditional Western and global civil liberties and natural human rights. Defenders of civil liberties and natural human rights do not: (1) tend to silence exercise of the free speech of those who disagree with them and banish it from the public square; (2) through *ad hominem* and *strawman* arguments, incline to demonize as *conspiracy* theorists those who intellectually oppose them; and (3) engage, or advocate engaging, in practices that violate the Nuremberg Code, and, in some instances, seek to overturn it as antiquated.

As long ago as the first half of the 20th century, leading liberal thinkers *like the benevolent pagan* Mortimer J. Adler were warning Americans that *something was radically despotic about Modern and Enlightenment scientific positivism and the reductionistic principles related to truth that it accepted*, which were starting to predominate in the psychological disposition of the Western educated class from which our cultural and political leaders tend to arise.

For example, at a 1941 New York City “Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion,” *the self-declared politically liberal, globalist, and democratic socialist* Adler criticized the “founding members” and “eminent representatives of the various academic disciplines” from mostly American colleges and universities (but also attending members from learned societies, and academic disciplines that extended beyond philosophy, religion, and modern science to include social scientists of different sorts—such as, historians and humanistic scholars) for organizing and, or, participating in a meeting that, from the start, *in its principles*, was doomed to fail. To host a meeting of such a nature to accomplish some aim, purpose, which could not be “accomplished in the ordinary processes of our academic life—in classrooms, faculty meetings, or the sessions of

learned societies,” Adler had maintained that its organizers would have to be able rationally to “justify this Conference as trying to do something which is not, and perhaps cannot be, accomplished in the ordinary processes of our academic life—in classrooms, faculty meetings, or the sessions of learned societies.” (The full text of Adler’s entire Conference address cited herein [can be found here](#)).

According to Adler, all the participants had assembled at this Conference because, for different reasons and in different degrees, they had all shared “an uneasiness about something” they had called their “present situation.” They had come to this Conference because they were crying “with one voice that all’s not right with the world.” From some explanations he had heard given at the meeting about the chief aim, purpose, for their gathering—which had made mention of the World War II conflict “between democracy and totalitarianism in the political arena” or the then-current battle “between individualism and collectivism in the economic sphere”—Adler had asked the participants, “If that were the full nature of the crisis, why should we waste time talking about science, philosophy and religion?”

In answer to that rhetorical question, Adler gave the following reply:

The fact that we have chosen to consider three major components of human culture should indicate that we all have a vague sense of cultural disorder as the root of our troubles, *as the source of a threatening doom* (our italics). Far from being prime movers, Hitler and Mussolini, or, if you wish, the Stalins and Chamberlains, are but paranoiac puppets, dancing for a moment on the crest of the wave—the wave that is the historic motion of modern culture to its own destruction. A culture is not killed by political conflicts, even when they attain the shattering violence of modern warfare; nor by economic revolutions, even when they involve the dislocations of modern mass uprisings.

A culture dies of diseases which are themselves cultural. It may be born sick, as modern culture was, or it may decay through insufficient vitality to overcome the disruptive forces present in every culture; but, in any case, cultural disorder is a cause and not an effect of the political and economic disturbances which beset the world today.

The health of a culture, like the health of the body, consists in the harmonious functioning of its parts. Science, philosophy and religion are certainly major parts of European culture; their distinction from one another as quite separate parts is certainly the most characteristic cultural achievement of modern times. But if they have not been properly distinguished, they cannot be properly related; and unless they are properly related, properly ordered to one another, cultural disorder, such as that of modern times, inevitably results.

According to Adler, in actuality their Conference had been called to consider the psychological illness of American culture and to seek and effect remedies for that cultural disorder. One reason they had to call a special meeting to do this was because the nature of the contemporary university, with its separate academic *departments* of scientists, philosophers, and theologians, or teachers of religion, had “long failed to *communicate* with one another” (our italics).

“The structure of a modern, *Enlightenment* (our addition in italics) university, with its departmental separations,” where academic members do not tend to communicate with each other, “and its total lack of order among specialized disciplines,” he added,

represents perfectly the disunity and chaos of modern culture. Since nothing can be expected of the professors *locked up in their departmental cells* (our italics), since reforming our institutions of higher learning (to make them truly universities) seems to be impossible, since the ordinary processes of academic life manifest the very defects which must be remedied, the professors have been assembled under the special auspices of this Conference with the hope that lines of communication can be established. That done, one might even hope for communication to lead to mutual understanding, and thence to agreement about the truths which could unify our culture.

If what I have said is not the purpose of this Conference, I can see no justification for it whatsoever. The fact that all the professors gathered mention the Present Crisis, without trying to agree about its nature and causes; the fact that they manifest some concern about

Democracy, without trying to define it and understand its roots; the fact that, in a baffling variety of senses, they refer to Science, Philosophy and Religion, without trying to solve the intricate problem of the relationship of these disciplines,—all this amounts to nothing.

An undertaking of this sort is not needed to make professors think or talk this way. Nor is it needed to give them an opportunity to write and read papers which do credit to their specialized scholarly achievements. Unless this be a Conference in more than name only, unless it be a concerted effort to reach a common understanding of our cultural failure and a common program for its reform, this gathering will be as vacuous and futile as many another solemn conclave of professors, advertised by high-sounding and promising titles.

Adler then told the participants there present that, if he had accurately stated the only purpose that could rationally justify the existence of the Conference, “it cannot possibly succeed.” *No matter how good it might be, he added, even the best of all possible conferences could not succeed in reforming modern culture. Nor could anyone even succeed correcting one of the main causes of its disorder—modern education with its narrow, reductionistic, underlying principles of scientific positivism.* And the chief reason for this was because “one cannot expect the professors to understand what is wrong with modern culture and modern education, for the simple reason that that would require them to understand what is wrong with their own mentality.” Since professors come to a conference of this sort with the intention of speaking their minds but not of changing them, with a willingness to listen but not to learn, with the kind of tolerance which delights in a variety of opinions and abominates the unanimity of agreement,” he added, “it is preposterous to suppose that this Conference can even begin to realize the only ends which justify the enterprise.”

Instead of a conference related to science, philosophy, religion, and democracy, Adler had maintained, they needed:

a conference about the professors of science, philosophy and religion, especially American professors whose intellectual attitudes

express a false conception of democracy. The defects of modern culture are the defects of its intellectual leaders, its teachers and savants. The disorder of modern culture is a disorder in their minds, a disorder which manifests itself in the universities they have built, in the educational system they have devised, in the teaching they do, and which, through that teaching, perpetuates itself and spreads out in ever widening circles from generation to generation. It is a little naive, therefore, to suppose that the professors can be called upon to solve the problem of the relationship of science, philosophy and religion in our education and in our culture—as naive as it would be to invite the professors to participate in a conference about what is wrong with the professors.

With a few notable exceptions, the members of this Conference represent the American academic mind. It is that fact itself which makes it unnecessary, as well as unwise, for me to make any effort in the way of reasoning. I know too well, from much experience, the opinions of this audience, and of all the professors they represent—about the nature and relationship of science, philosophy and religion.

According to Adler, (1) the prevailing opinions of American college and university professors in 1941 about the natures of science, philosophy, religion, and democracy were those of scientific positivism and *were wrong*; and (2) American culture at the time was suffering grave disorders precisely because it embodied these positivistic opinions as first principles of imagining, judging, reasoning, and understanding. As a result, while some rational point had existed at the time for someone to host such a conference with the aim of fixing the then-prevalent errors, asking college and university professors to do so was pointless, was like asking incendiaries to help extinguish a forest fire.

He went on to charge most of the Conference participants of being scientific positivists, of only paying lip-service to admitting that some truth exists in the disciplines of philosophy and religion. And while he said he knew that enough varieties of positivism exist to allow “the professors to retain their individuality,” he insisted that *behind the many technical jargons lay a generic doctrine: the affirmation that the whole of truth lies in*

contemporary mathematical-physical science, and the denial that any truth resides in the disciplines of philosophy and religion.

While, upon hearing his claim that some truth resides in philosophy and religion, he said professors at the meeting would smile, bemuse themselves at his simplicity, deny the truth of what he had said, and cordially ask, “Whoever heard anyone, except a few violent extremists, flatly denying philosophy and religion; as a matter of fact, such dogmatic denials are made only by a small circle of ‘philosophers’ who blatantly advertise themselves as positivists. The very presence at this Conference of scientists, philosophers and theologians shows that the representatives of the several disciplines respect each other; the fact that they are willing to listen to each other’s papers shows the spirit of cooperation which prevails among them.”

Some Conference members would even start “*to wonder about the sanity* (our italics) of those who talk about the disorder and disunity of modern culture. The real problem of this Conference must be the perils of Democracy; it certainly cannot be the issue about positivism.”

Despite such attempts at politely disagreeing with him, Adler repeated his charge. *He said that then-contemporary American professors were, by and large, scientific positivists.* And he immediately added that “the most serious threat to Democracy is the positivism of the professors, which dominates every aspect of modern education and is the central corruption of modern culture. *Democracy has much more to fear from the mentality of its teachers than from the nihilism of Hitler* (our italics). It is the same nihilism in both cases, but Hitler's is more honest and consistent, less blurred by subtleties and queasy qualifications, and hence less dangerous.”

Among other claims, Adler added:

Religion cannot be regarded as just another aspect of culture, one among many human occupations, of indifferent importance along with science and art, history and philosophy. Religion is either the supreme human discipline, because it is God’s discipline of man, and as such dominates our culture, or it has no place at all. The mere toleration of religion, which implies indifference to or denial of its claims, produces a secularized culture as much as militant atheism or Nazi nihilism.

He stated that the philosophers at the time who thought all the significant questions men ask are answerable by “scientific reason” or not at all were *philosophical naturalists* in the sense of philosophically defending the positivism of scientists (*mathematical physicists*, our addition) “who think that science alone is valid knowledge, and that science is enough for the conduct of life.” If the philosophy professors were positivists, they had to be philosophical naturalists. Adler stated that such people “dishonor themselves as well as religion by tolerating it when, all equivocations overcome, they really think that faith is superstition, just as they really think philosophy is opinion. The kind of positivism and naturalism which is revealed in all their works and all their teaching is at the root of modern secularized culture.”

In saying this, Adler added that his reason for so doing had a moral foundation. He had wished “the professors might examine their conscience in the light of clearly defined issues, and acknowledge plainly what they really think. I know, of course, that that is too much to hope for. But since actions speak louder than words, no one who understands the issues will be deceived by what the professors have to say, however much they fool themselves.” In and of itself, the professorial conduct of the Conference belied “the professorial speech, the polite discourse, the insulting tolerance, which conceals the dismissal of philosophy as opinion and religion as superstition behind expressions of specious respect.”

Even though the claim was made by an ethnic Jew, Mortimer Adler’s assertion that modern positivistic college and university professors—scientific naturalists—were worse than Hitler and, in their principles, were as bad as militant atheists and nihilists, might shock the moral sensibilities of some readers of this Manifesto. Some might react to it with the same sort of moral indignation as those professors who had attended the 1941 Conference at which he had spoken. As a result, on the basis of their high moral and professional standards, they might decide that they could never support, or sign on, to a document such as this one.

Nonetheless, they might want to reconsider the wisdom and prudence of such a psychological reaction. Adler’s assertions about Hitler and militant atheism, nihilism, scientific naturalism, and the disorders that consistent application of its principles necessarily produces within a culture is simply

an analogous transposition of the philosophical claims brought by Socrates against the Ancient Greek sophists Gorgias Polus, Callicles, and Thrasymachos in Plato's dialogues *Gorgias* and *Republic*. Strictly speaking, *because the principles they repeatedly inculcated into the souls of their students were essentially totalitarian, these sophists were culturally worse and more damaging to Ancient Greek culture than were the despotic politicians, paranoid puppets—like Archelaus— that they had produced.* Analogously considered, had the readers, who today negatively react to what this Manifesto reports Adler had said in 1941, been alive in Athens in 399 B.C.; intellectually and morally they would have sided with the sophists and against Socrates at his trial. Apart from being morally wrong, they would have been philosophically wrong and on the wrong side of history—just as they will be now!

In continuing his acerbic analysis and critique, Adler mentioned that the failure of the Conference to do the only work which had rationally justified its existence had perfectly symbolized:

the absence of cultural community in the modern world; worse than that, it justifies the most extreme pessimism about an impending catastrophe, for until THE professors (that is, the scientific naturalists) and their culture are liquidated, the resolution of modern problems—a resolution which history demands shall be made—will not even begin. The tower of Babel we are building invites another flood (our italics, and our parenthetical addition).

The failure of this Conference is due not only to the fact that the professors are, for the most part, positivists; but even more so to their avoidance of what is demanded for fruitful intellectual procedure. Unlike the mediaeval man of learning, the modern professor will not subject himself to the rigors of public disputation. He emasculates discussion by treating it as an exchange of opinions, in which no one gains or loses because everyone keeps his own. He is indocile in the sense that, beyond the field of science, he cannot be instructed, because he acknowledges no ignorance.

Hence anyone who would try to instruct him about philosophical or religious truths would be regarded as authoritarian, as trying to

impose a doctrine. He is scandalized by the very notion of a commonly shared truth for all men. Even though such truth can be attained only by the free activity of each mind, the fact that no mind is free to reject the truth seems like an infringement upon his sacred liberties. What he means by truth in science and by agreement among scientists permits him to talk as if he were a truth-seeker and willing to agree; but that is because the contingent and tentative character of scientific knowledge so perfectly fits the egoism, the individualism, the libertinism, of the modern mind.

The greater necessity and finality of truth in philosophy and religion oblige a mind in ways it will not suffer. On fundamental questions, which means all the questions beyond the scope of science, he wishes to keep a thoroughly open mind forever; he wishes neither to be convinced of anything nor to convince anyone. Hence he would not participate in a conference which required everyone to agree upon the fundamental questions to be answered, and measured its success by the degree to which such answers were commonly achieved as a result of the most patient discussion.

After finishing indicating what he called “the significance of this Conference for the state of our culture, *and the doom it forebodes*” (our addition), Adler concluded his talk by stating he wanted briefly to indicate the relation his analysis had “to the crisis of Democracy.” Holding as a conclusion that he maintained could “be demonstrated in terms of the truths of moral and political philosophy,” he stated the positivists can say “nothing.” According to them:

Outside the sphere of science nothing can be demonstrated, and the proposition that Democracy is the best political order certainly lies outside the sphere of science. What is neither self-evident nor demonstrable must be an opinion, which attracts or repels us emotionally. Anyone who denies that philosophy is knowledge denies, of course, the self-evidence of moral principles and the validity of moral demonstrations.

Hence the professors can be for Democracy only because they like it, not because they know it is right. They talk a great deal about natural

rights and the dignity of man, but this is loose and irresponsible talk, in which they lightly indulge because they do not mind contradicting themselves. *There are no natural rights if there is no natural moral law, which is binding upon all men everywhere in the same way. Man has no dignity if he is not a rational animal, essentially distinct from the brutes by reason of the spiritual dimension of his being. This should be enough to make clear that positivists are forced to deny the rights and dignity of man, or hold such views only as prejudice, rationally no better than Hitler's prejudices to the contrary. But to reinforce the point that the professors have no grounds for any of their fine feelings, let me add that the same facts which warrant man's dignity as an end to be served by the state also imply that man has an immortal soul, and a destiny beyond the temporal order. In short, one cannot have reasons for affirming Democracy and at the same time deny the truths of philosophy and religion* (our italics).

Beyond intrinsic human dignity, Adler should have added that the existence of an immortal human soul is a necessary condition for the existence of 'scientific' truth. Such *scientific* truth (abstractly considered truth that in the here and now exists as a truth abstractly judged to be true always and everywhere), *such uncommon commonsense* truth, can only exist in the *intellectual soul* of a scientist in the present time as a truth generated as part of a providentially-guided order. It cannot exist in a brute animal. Nor can it exist in an angel or in God (because Angelic and Divine science are not human science, and brutes have no science at all).

Unhappily for Adler, in 1941 he had not had the advantage of reading C. S. Lewis's masterful monograph, *The Abolition of Man* (which was published two years later). Had Adler had the opportunity to have read this work, we have no doubt he would have agreed with Lewis's assessment that, without the existence of a judging and reasoning principle existing within an embodied, animal soul (a rational center of psychological influence essentially connected to the human body as a prudential command and control moral principle, cause, able rationally to regulate and constrain the human passions so as to enable an abstract, syllogistic intellect, with total emotional impartiality, to execute commands of commonsense, right

reason, within the human emotions), “man is not man,” and, strictly speaking, “Christian” man can never be “Christian” man.

As Lewis said, “The Chest-Magnanimity-Sentiment,” animal rationality (what St. Thomas Aquinas considered to be a specific difference unique to a human animal, allowing an immortal, rational soul to overflow into a sentient part of the same soul, where Aquinas located “common sense,” deliberative “choice,” and the moral virtue of “prudence”)—“these are the indispensable liaison officers between cerebral man and visceral man.” St. Thomas and Lewis had maintained that, without embodiment of prudential moral principles within the human soul (moral principles that enable, cause, human beings to be abstractly impartial judges and emotionally self-controlled decision-makers), what is thought to be, and is called, a “human soul” is actually a disembodied spirit, or disembodied intellect.

Such a disembodied entity does not correspond to the Christian understanding of a human soul. And a soulless body (a body in which spirit is not an animating principle of life, growth, and development of a living, sentient, organic matter) does not correspond to a Christian understanding of a human body. Lewis adds, “It may even be said that it is by this middle element (the rationally-sentient soul) that man is man: for by his intellect he is mere spirit and by his appetite mere animal.” (C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man: Reflections on Education with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in the Upper Forms of School* (New York: Macmillan, 1955), 34; St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 77, a. 3, respondeo).

It is within reason existing as such a free, command and-control principle of the sense faculties and emotions in the animal part of the human soul that St. Thomas most precisely locates deliberative choice, common sense, the moral virtue of prudence, and our specific, human difference! The resulting composite is an animal that senses with its intellect and intellectualizes with its senses: an animal able personally to execute animal activity in its highest form, *in a humanly soulful way*: simultaneously abstractly (calmly), syllogistically, and commonsensically, deliberatively, passionately, concretely with prudence, in touch with sense reality in the individual situation—a truly scientific animal!

By generating the faculty of sensory reasoning, sentient, command-and-control reason (a faculty St. Thomas calls “particular reason”—which he claims corresponds to “instinct” in brute animals (*S. th.*, I, q. 78, a. 4, respondeo; I, q. 78, a. 4, ad 5)—Aquinas maintains that the intellectual soul generates a personally-human, *animal rationality* (one that reasons abstractly and syllogistically when not focusing attention on concrete, individual, animal activity) to overflow through the sensitive part of the soul into the human body and sense reality as a personally-animal, command and-control, prudential ruling principle of the sensitive faculties, passions, and all their activities. In so doing, the rational part of the soul enables the sensitive part to achieve its animal perfection as an acting, sensitive soul, an acting person (as St. John Paul II was fond of saying)—something that no other animal soul can achieve: being a deliberative (free), commonsensical animal!

As Lewis prudently observes, “Without the aid of trained emotions, the intellect is powerless against the animal organism.” To this sage observation, Lewis adds: “In battle it is not syllogisms that will keep the reluctant nerves and muscles to their post in the third hour of bombardment. The crudest sentimentalism. . . about a flag, or a country, or a regiment will be of more use. We were told it all long ago by Plato. As the king governs by his executive, so Reason in man must rule the mere appetites by means of the spirited element. The head rules the belly through the chest.” Absent such training, Lewis maintains, “We make men without chests (what, today, we commonly call ‘snowflakes,’ those who are ‘Woke’) and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honour and are shocked to find traitors in our midst. We castrate and bid the geldings to be fruitful.” As Lewis warns us, the practical result of an education that denies such a reason and such a reality must be “the destruction of the society which accepts it.” (Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*, 33–35)

Such a society is the one Adler describes in concluding his scathing critique of “the sort of democracy to which the professors are sentimentally attached.” He states that such a democracy can never exist in reality. Its existence

cannot be demonstrably proved, for theirs is an essentially false conception. The social order they would like to preserve is the

anarchic individualism, the corrupt liberalism, which is the most vicious caricature of Democracy. Objecting to any inequalities in value, objecting to any infringement of absolute individual liberty by loyalties and obligations to superior goods, they want a democracy without hierarchy and without authority. In short, they want chaos, not order, a society in which everyone will be as free as if he lived alone, a community in which common bonds will not bind the individual at all. Even when they speak enthusiastically about this false ideal, the professors seldom claim that they have rational grounds for its defense. The very fact that they so frequently refer to democracy, not as a government or as a political order, but as a way of life, reveals them as exponents of a false religion. This religion of democracy is no better than the religion of fascism. One is the idolatry of individual liberty as the other is the worship of collective might.

One of the greatest achievements of the modern world is the discovery of the moral and political reasons for the democratic ideal, as well as actual experimentation in the field of democratic processes. But though it be in this sense a child of modern times, Democracy will not be fully achieved until modern culture is radically reformed. Science contributes nothing whatsoever to the understanding of Democracy. Without the truths of philosophy and religion, Democracy has no rational foundation. In America at present it is at best a cult, a local prejudice, a traditional persuasion. Today it is challenged by other cults which seem to have more might, and no less right, so far as American ability to defend democracy rationally is concerned.

For all these reasons I say we have more to fear from our professors than from Hitler. It is they who have made American education what it is, both in content and method: in content, an indoctrination of positivism and naturalism; in method, an exhibition of anarchic individualism masquerading as the democratic manner. Whether Hitler wins or not, the culture which is formed by such education cannot support what democracy we have against interior decay.

If I dared to raise my voice as did the prophets in ancient Israel, I would ask whether the tyrants of today are not like the Babylonian and Assyrian kings— instruments of Divine justice, chastening a people who had departed from the way of truth. In the inscrutable Providence of God, and according to the nature of man, a civilization may sometimes reach a rottenness which only fire can expunge and cleanse. If the Babylonians and Assyrians were destroyers, they were also deliverers. Through them, the prophets realized, God purified His people. Seeing the hopelessness of working peaceful reforms among a people who had shut their eyes and hardened their hearts, the prophets almost prayed for such deliverance, through the darkness of destruction, to the light of a better day. So, perhaps, the Hitlers in the world today are preparing the agony through which our culture shall be reborn. Certainly if it is part of the Divine plan to bless man's temporal civilization with the goodness of Democracy, that civilization must be rectified. It is probably not from Hitler, but from the professors, that we shall ultimately be saved.

As Adler clearly shows, contemporary Enlightenment colleges and universities are essentially designed to drive out common sense and moral prudence from the psyche of students and convince them that the only species of understanding (common sense) in which truth exists is mathematical physics. In doing this, they cause students to become anarchists, unteachable, “Woke” individuals out of touch with reality who, like their Enlightened professors, cannot tolerate to listen or to speak to or with anyone who disagrees with them.

Common sense is simply some understanding of first principles that cause some organizational whole to have the unity it has that causes it to tend to behave the way it does. Most of the time, most of us have little of it. When we do, this is because we possess an understanding common to anyone who intellectually grasps the nature of some organization, the way the parts (causal principles) of a whole incline to organize to generate organizational existence, unity, and action. Strictly speaking, common sense is the habit of rightly (commonsensically) applying first principles of understanding as measures of truth in immediate and mediated judgment, choice, and reasoning! Considered as such, it is the first measure of right

(or commonsense) understanding and reasoning. Strictly speaking, only a morally and intellectually prudential person can develop this psychological disposition. It is a necessary condition for anyone to possess to become a real scientist—an emotionally impartial judge of truth and psychologically stable human being.

Before being taught outside the home, children generally learn some common sense by first becoming teachable at home—developing the moral virtue of *docilitas* (docility) from parents and from their individual *conscience* (*which, according to Aquinas, is the habit of prudence acting as judge, jury, witness, and prosecution of personal choices: Note—a person with no moral prudence is incapable of having a conscience*). Unless human beings become habitually inclined to regulate our human emotions by the moral virtue of prudence, which is simply a species of common sense, human beings tend to become psychologically disordered, anarchists, barbarians. Worse than this, as the 1960s political radical Thomas Merton has well documented in his masterpiece “A Devout Meditation in Memory of Adolf Eichmann,” in his monograph *Raids on the Unspeakable* (New York, New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1964), we tend to become psychologically unhealthy, morally depraved, insane *little Eichmanns*.

Reporting about one of the most disturbing facts he had discovered in the 1961 Eichmann trial in Jerusalem was that a psychiatrist who had examined him had pronounced Eichmann *perfectly sane*. Merton said he did not doubt this at all, and that is precisely why he found it disturbing. Had all the Nazis had been psychotics, Eichmann’s appalling cruelty would have made him easier for Merton to understand. Much more difficult for him to comprehend was “this calm, ‘well balanced,’ unperturbed official conscientiously going about his desk work, his administrative job which happened to be the supervision of mass murder” (p. 45).

According to the psychological profile given of him by the psychiatrist, Eichmann “was thoughtful, orderly, unimaginative. He had a profound respect for system, for law and order. He was obedient, loyal, faithful officer of a great state. He served his government very well” (p. 45). He was simply a middle-management, Enlightenment-educated bureaucrat *with a dysfunctional conscience* doing his Enlightenment job.

Merton found Eichmann's 'sanity' disturbing because (like Adler, Lewis, and all psychologically healthy human beings), he equated "sanity with a sense of justice, with humanness, with prudence, with the capacity to love and understand other people. We rely on the sane people of the world to preserve it from barbarism, madness, destruction. And now it begins to dawn on us that it is precisely the same sane ones who are the most dangerous" (p. 46).

Like Adler and Lewis, Merton started to reflect upon the meaning of being *psychologically healthy, sane* in an Enlightenment world in which the meaning of a concept of sanity reduces human rationality to that of an intellect separated from an animal body, or restricted to brute animal nature. In both cases, like Adler and Lewis, he recognized that, by removing from a person the ability to have an animal rationality to control animal emotions, a human being necessarily becomes psychopathic, a robotic artificial intelligence or a wild animal that excludes love, moral prudence, and a healthy conscience from human life, considers love "irrelevant, and destroys our capacity to love other human beings, to respond to their needs and their sufferings, to recognize them as persons, to apprehend their pain as one's own. . . . Evidently this is not necessary for 'sanity' at all. It is a religious notion, a spiritual notion, a Christian notion" (p. 47).

In calling sanity "a Christian notion" Merton did not mean to imply that only Christians can be, or are, morally prudent, sane, or have a healthy conscience. He knew that history belied such a claim. Like Adler, Lewis, and Aquinas, he meant that being psychologically healthy, sane, morally prudent, essentially involves recognizing, like real Christians do, that a human being has an immortal soul possessed of a personal dignity and inalienable human rights that exists within a providentially guided order governed by a just and loving God. Even Christians, he said, can and do "cling to a certain set of Christian formulas, and fit them into a Totalist Ideology. Let them talk about justice, charity, love, and the rest. These words have not stopped some sane men from acting very soundly and cleverly in the past" (p. 48).

Those who recognize we live in such a providentially ordered world, we *add*, necessarily recognize that we live in some organizational whole in which our present way of existing is essentially connected to our future—

that, in some way, we are incompletely what *we are to become, are essentially related to something that does not yet exist: our selves* as we are coming to human completion. Unless we accept the reality of a providential order in which some intellectual being (like a Creator God) exists capable, in the present, of intellectually straddling the present and the future and, *somehow, making intelligible to us how we can be essentially related to something that does not yet exist, and actually causing this relationship to be, we ask, “How is this really possible? If this relationship is not real, does not exist, is not our real situation, the world we inhabit, essentially anarchic, insane?*

Within such a world, how can we ever possess common sense or the virtue of moral prudence, a healthy conscience, or any conscience at all? Moreover, how can a natural moral law binding upon all human beings everywhere in the same way—and the natural human rights and human dignity that essentially flow from it—exist if the virtue of prudence does not exist? As Adler said, “Man has no dignity if he is not a rational animal, essentially distinct from the brutes by reason of the spiritual dimension of his being.”

And what is to become of sanity as a sign of psychological health, as a human virtue? Sanity is only a virtue if it is a psychological disposition existing in the human imagination, and in the conceiving, judging, and reasoning faculties of a human soul regulated by intellectual and moral prudence. Precisely because Eichmann’s moral imagination was unmoored from, out of touch with, reality and lacked ordinary, human common sense, it was dull, insane. And so, too, were his conceiving, judging, and reasoning faculties. As a result, he was totally, or almost, completely devoid of a conscience, completely insane.

In the Enlightenment world of Adolf Eichmann and those who think about being sane the way he did (as scientific positivists fighting each other “for power over the whole world”), in an article entitled “Letter to an Innocent Bystander” (in *Raids on the Unspeakable*), Merton asks whether any of “us” who oppose “them,” including those who passively resist “them”—quietly biding our time to act—are really engaged in the “form of action”? While waiting for a time to strike might not be inertia, according to Merton, this “is only true, when one is resisting, and knows why, and to what end, he is

resisting, and whom he must resist. Unless our waiting implies knowledge and action we will find ourselves waiting for our own distraction and nothing more. A witness of a crime, who just stands by and makes a mental note of the fact that he is an innocent bystander, tends by that very fact to become an accomplice” (55).

Merton asserts that “our” confusion in the face of contemporary global political power struggles by global elites “enables ‘them’ to use us, and to pit us against one another, for their own purposes. Our guilt, our deep resentment, do nothing to preserve us from a shameful fate. On the contrary, our resentment is what fits us most perfectly to be ‘their’ instruments.” Our inability to know how to react to them, our seemingly helpless inertia, prevents us from being able to claim we are innocent. “It is the source of our guilt” (55–56).

By “our guilt” Merton does not mean all of “us” who presently oppose them. He tells us, “We are the intellectuals who have taken for granted that we could be ‘bystanders’ and that our quality as detached observers could preserve our innocence and relieve us of responsibility” (54). He means intellectuals like himself—talented writers and speakers, philosophers, theologians, poets: liberal artists of different sorts who know how to recognize, and use their talent to fight, propaganda. Regarding such people, he asks:

Is non-participation possible? Can complicity be avoided? You in your country and I in mine—you in your circle and I in my monastery: does the fact that we hate and resent tyranny and try to dissociate ourselves from it suffice to keep us innocent?

First, let us assume that we are clear who ‘they’ are. When I speak of ‘them,’ you will understand that I mean those special ones who seek power over ‘all the others,’ and who use us as instruments to gain power over the others. Just are three groups I am thinking of: ‘they,’ ‘we,’ and ‘the others.’ We, the intellectuals, stand in the middle and we must not forget that in the end everything depends on us.

It is therefore supremely important for us not to yield to despair,

abandon ourselves to the 'inevitable' and identify ourselves with 'them.' Our duty is to refuse to believe that their way is 'inevitable.' And it is equally important for us not to set ourselves exclusively apart from 'the others' who depend on us and upon whom we ourselves also depend (56).

"When we 'stand by' we try to think of ourselves as independent, as standing on our own feet. It is true that as intellectuals we ought to stand on our own feet— but one cannot learn to do this until he has first recognized the extent to which he requires the support of others. And it is our business to support one another against 'them,' not to be supported by 'them' and used to crush 'the others' (58–59).

'They,' of course, have never really been in any position to support anyone. 'They' need us, but not our strength. They do not want us strong, but weak. It is our emptiness 'they' need, as justification for their own emptiness. That is why their support comes always, and only, in the form of bribes. We are nourished in order that we may continue to sleep. We are paid to keep calm, or to say things that do not disturb the unruffled surface of that emptiness from which, in due time, the spark and the blast must leap out and release, in all men, the grand explosion (59).

As for the powerful ones, it is our job to recognize them even without their police, even before the establishment of their machinery. We must identify them wherever 'they' may appear, even though they may rise up in the midst of ourselves or among 'the others.' We must be able to recognize 'them' by what they are and not rest satisfied with what is said about them, by others or by themselves or above all by one of us! It is already rare for an intellectual to retain his sense of judgment when 'they' change their masks and re-shuffle their labels and put on different badges. Yet 'they' are always 'they.' It is to their obvious interest to bribe us to give them a new name, false identity, especially since, and doing so, we convince ourselves that we have made a brilliant discovery.

We must not let our vanity provide 'them' with false passports (56–57).

As Étienne Gilson tells us in his celebrated *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), since, strictly speaking, Western culture (by which, broadly considered, Gilson essentially means the ancient Greek culture the ancient Romans had inherited, which was subsequently transfused by the ancient Church Fathers with Christian religious teachings, progressively increased by numerous artists, writers, philosophers, and scientists from the start of the Middle Ages to the present day) only exists in and through those who have created, and continue to create, it in the cultural institutions they have caused and continue to cause, *the West cannot be dying without such individuals being aware of it* (271–272).

Regarding this inherited cultural enterprise, Gilson asks a very sobering question: “Can a social order, begotten by a common faith in the value of certain principles, keep on living when all faith in these principles is lost?” (272–273).

Best to illustrate the meaning of this question Gilson gives a summary description of two *principles* that, for him, constitute what, for brevity's sake, he calls “The Western Creed”: two civilizational principles essential to the subsequent development of Western culture and all its cultural institutions.

Principle 1 is a firm belief of the ancient Greeks in the eminent dignity of human beings. As Gilson says:

The Greeks of classical times never wavered in their conviction, that of all the things that can be found in nature, man is by far the highest, and that of all the things important for man to know, by far the most important is man. When Socrates, after unsuccessful attempts to deal with physical problems, made up his mind to dedicate himself to the exclusive study of man, he was making a momentous decision. ‘Know thyself’ is not only the key to Greek culture, but to the classical culture of the Western world as well. What the Greeks left to their successors was a vast body of knowledge related to man's nature and his various needs: logic, which is the science of how to think; several different philosophies, all of them culminating in ethics and politics, which are the sciences of how to live; remarkable specimens of history and political

eloquence, related to the life of the city. As to what today we call positive science, the greatest achievements of the Greek genius were along the lines of mathematics, a knowledge which man draws from his own mind without submitting to the degrading tyranny of material facts; and medicine, whose proper object is to ensure the well-being of the human body. And they stopped there, checked by an obscure feeling that the rest was not worth having, at least bit at the price which the human mind would have to pay for it: its freedom from matter, its internal liberty (272–273).

Principle 2 is one that Gilson was convinced had culturally saved the ancient Greeks from constructing the monstrous idol which we, in the modern and contemporary West, have made with our own hands to modern and Enlightenment man's image and likeness. Hence, like Adler, Lewis, and Merton, Gilson identifies the second essential principle of Western culture and the Western Creed that we had inherited from the ancient Greeks to be "the conviction that reason is the specific difference of human beings" (p. 274).

Try to transform man's specific difference from human reason and turn it into universal consciousness existing separated from the individual human body like that of a logical android or that of brute animal with no reasoning faculty and Gilson maintains that we can no longer explain how a disembodied mind or a brute animal can regulate the human appetites and explain how human beings are moral agents:

Man is best described as a rational animal; deprive man of reason and what is left of man is not man, but animal. This looks like a very commonplace statement, yet Western culture is dying wherever it is forgotten: for the rational nature of man is the only foundation for a rational system of ethics. Morality is essentially normality; for a rational being to act either without reason or contrary to its dictates is to act and behave not exactly as a beast, but as a beastly man, which is worse. For it is proper that a beast should act as a beast, that is, according to its own nature; but it is totally unfitting for a man to act as a beast, because that means the total oblivion of his own nature, and hence his final destruction (274).

Remarkable to Gilson is the centuries-long continuity by the subsequent generations within Western culture of these two principles inherited from the ancient Greeks. They had survived transmission to Christian culture, the Christian Middle Ages, renaissance humanism, the 16th-century Protestant Reformation, and even early modern discoveries in mathematical physics. So long as science remained faithful to its own philosophical, and chiefly metaphysical and moral, nature, Gilson says, “it remained the healthy exercise of reason, reason seeking to know because knowing is its natural function” (275–276).

He adds that, “Even the most stupendous progress made by the physical and biological sciences entailed no disruption in the continuity of Western culture. While man remained in control of nature (*that is, retained the self-understanding of being a rational, and chiefly metaphysical and moral animal*), Western culture could survive. It was lost from the very moment nature began to control man (*that is, from the moment science became transformed into the Nietzschean will to power*)” (276, italics ours).

Historically (in his little known, but prophetic, monograph, *The Terrors of the Year 2000*, written in 1948, and published by St. Michael’s College of the University of Toronto, Canada, 1949), Gilson identified the precise date of this radical transformation to be the dropping of the Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima, Japan.

Within a few short pages, Gilson makes clear to his readers the nature of the terror he had envisioned besetting the Year Two Thousand. At the close of World War II, we human beings made our most astounding discovery, whose symbolism is more striking because it is involuntary: “the great secret that science has just wrested from matter is the secret of its destruction. To know today is synonymous with to destroy” (5–7).

Gilson maintains that the discovery of nuclear fission went far beyond being an inseparable union of good and evil involving: (1) “the most intimate revelation of the nature of the physical world,” (2) “the freeing of the most powerful energy that has ever been held,” and (3) “the most frightful agent of destruction which man has ever had at his disposal.” He predicts, “The age of atomic physics will see the birth of a new world, as different from our own age as ours is from the world before steam and electricity.” He says this new world presented human beings with a tragic

dilemma. We know so many things today that our science might preclude our ability to control our own domination. In former times, Gilson states, we human beings mastered nature by obeying her. From now on, he claimed, we would master nature by destroying her (7–9).

For once, to Gilson, the most daring prophecies of H. G. Wells appeared tame—because “in *The Island of Dr. Moreau* they were still only working to transform wild brutes into men; in the future society, it is men whom they will be transforming into brutes—to use them to foster the ends of a humanity thenceforth unworthy of the name” (9–11).

Gilson sees the dropping of the Atomic Bomb as a sign of the real possibility of the coming of the *Apocalypse*, which he thinks had been announced by Friedrich Nietzsche’s Enlightenment declaration of the *Death of God*. Did any man more deserve the title of *Antichrist* than he who brought Zarathustra’s terrifying message to the modern world? Gilson thinks not. He claims that Nietzsche’s declaration of God’s death marked in earnest the trans-valuation of values in the West and globally. Enlightenment man, Postmodern-man falsely-so-called, had explicitly started to put into action a plan formally to usurp God’s place, become God (11–14).

Gilson calls Nietzsche’s declaration “the capital discovery of modern times.” Compared to Nietzsche’s discovery, he maintains that, no matter how far back we trace human history, we “will find no upheaval to compare with this in the extent or in the depth of its cause.” Clearly, Gilson considers Nietzsche’s declaration of God’s death to a metaphysical revolution of the highest, widest, and deepest order. Nietzsche was metaphysical dynamite. He knew it, readily admitted it. “This is not just our imagination,” Gilson asserts. All we have to do is read Nietzsche’s *Ecce Homo* to find proof that what Gilson says is true: “I know my fate. A day will come when the remembrance of a fearful event will be fixed to my name, the remembrance of a unique crisis in the history of the earth, of the most profound clash of consciences, of a decree enacted against all that had been believed, enacted and sanctified right down to our days. I am not a man. I am dynamite.” (14–16; while Gilson gives no specific reference to the location of this passage and the ones that follow it in Nietzsche’s *Ecce Homo*, see Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Philosophy of Nietzsche*, no editor or translator listed [New York: Random House, Modern Library, 1954], 858,

875. This one starts the section “Why I am a Fatality.” See *Ecce Homo*, 923–933).

Clearly, to Gilson, the terrors of the year 2000 are, in root cause, metaphysical and moral. The chief clash of civilizations we face today is not between the politics of West and East, or the West and other political orders. It is a metaphysical and moral clash between the ancient and modern West.

Gilson said that, from time immemorial, we in the West have based our cultural creed and scientific inspiration upon the conviction that gods, or a God, existed. All of our Western intellectual and cultural institutions have presupposed the existence of a God or gods. No longer. All of a sudden, God no longer exists. Worse: He never existed! The implication is clear: “We shall have to change completely our every thought, word and deed. The entire human order totters on its base” (16–17).

If our entire cultural history depended upon the unswerving conviction that God exists, “the totality of the future must needs depend on the contrary certitude, that God does not exist.” The metaphysical and terror now become evident in their depths. Nietzsche’s message is a metaphysical and moral bomb more powerful than the atomic weapon dropped on Hiroshima: “Everything that was true from the beginning of the human race will suddenly become false.” (17) Moreover, mankind alone must create for itself a new self-definition, which will become human destiny, the human project.

What is that destiny, project? *To destroy*. Gilson tells us Nietzsche knew that as long as we believe that what is dead is alive we can never use our creative liberty. Nietzsche knew and readily admitted his mission was to destroy. Hence, he said:

When truth opens war on the age-old falsehood, we shall witness upheavals unheard of in the history of the world, earthquakes will twist the earth, the mountains and the valleys will be displaced, and everything hitherto imaginable will be surpassed. Politics will then be completely absorbed by the war of ideas and all the combinations of powers of the old society will be shattered since they are all built on falsehood: there will be wars such as the earth will never have seen

before. It is only with me that great politics begin on the globe. . . . I know the intoxicating pleasure of destroying to a degree proportionate to my power of destruction (16–17).

If Nietzsche spoke the truth about his project, which Gilson thinks he did, Gilson maintains that he was announcing the dawn of a new age in which the aim of *postmodern* Enlightenment culture, its metaphysical project, was to make war upon, to overthrow, traditional Western truths and values. To build our brave new world order, we have to overthrow the metaphysical and moral foundations of Western culture. “Before stating what will be true, we will have to say that everything by which man has thus far lived, everything by which he still lives, is deception and trickery.” As Nietzsche said, “He who would be a creator, both in good and evil, must first of all know how to destroy and to wreck values” (16–17).

In fact, Gilson claims, our traditional Western values are being wrecked all around us, everywhere, under our feet. He says he had stopped counting “the unheard of theories thrown at us under names as various as their methods of thought, each the harbinger of a new truth which promises to create shortly, joyously busy preparing the brave new world of tomorrow by first of all annihilating the world of today” (17–18).

What, then, are we who oppose Nietzsche’s project to do in the face of such a cataclysm? Nietzsche’s plan, his mission and that of his progeny, is to destroy “today to create tomorrow.” Gilson considers forgivable that we should not have anticipated Nietzsche’s advent. “But,” he says, “that we should not understand what he is doing while he is doing it right under our eyes, just as we were told he would do it—that bears witness to a stranger blindness. Can it really be that the herd of human being that is led to the slaughter has eyes and yet does not see?” Gilson’s explanation for such a depth of blindness was that announcement of a catastrophe of such an order usually leaves us “but a single escape: to disbelieve it and, in order not to believe, to refuse to understand” (17–18).

Those who reject the escape of sticking our heads in the sand while we are sheepishly led to the slaughterhouse have another choice—to recognize the reality of the enemy we face and the nature of his project and reasonably to oppose it. Postmodern man (actually modern man on steroids) is essentially Nietzschean. And his “mad ambition” is impossible to

achieve. We choose the way we can, not the way we wish. We might wish to become absolutely free creators, creators *ex nihilo*; but, at best, our wish is an impossible dream. To create in his turn *ex nihilo*, “man must first of all reestablish everywhere the void” (18–20).

This, then, has become *postmodern* Enlightenment man’s project: mad ambition, everywhere to reestablish the void. On all sides, *postmodern* Enlightenment man feels Nietzsche’s intoxicating joy, his mad delight, in the power of destruction. When Gilson says that Nietzsche is the Antichrist, he is speaking of Nietzsche metaphorically, much like Socrates says the Delphic oracle singled him out as an exemplar of wisdom in her cryptic message to his friend Chaerephon that “no one is wiser Socrates” (Plato, *Apology*, 23B).

The Antichrist is *postmodern* Enlightenment man drunk “with the supremely lucid madness of a creature who would annihilate the obstacle which *being* places in the way of his creative ambitions. Such is the profound sense of our solemn and tragic adventure. Antichrist is not among us, he is in us. It is man himself, usurping unlimited creative power and proceeding to the certain annihilation of that which is, in order to clear the way for the problematic creation of all that will be” (*Terrors of the Year* 2000, 20–21).

While Gilson did not say so specifically, the Antichrist as Gilson had described him as embodied in Nietzsche is the secularized ghost of Renaissance humanism haunting the Earth, the postmodern attempt to *supplant creation with metaphysical epic poetry effected through the unbridled free spirit of artistic destruction*. No wonder, then, that Gilson would turn to a critic of Stéphane Mallarmé’s poetic project to find just the right phraseology to describe “precisely the sacrilegious effort whose meaning” he sought to unravel: “to construct a poetry which would have the value of preternatural creation and which would be able to enter into rivalry with the world of created things to the point of supplanting it totally” (21–22).

Postmodern man’s Enlightenment project is universal surrealism, total release of human reason, of creative free spirit, from all metaphysical, moral, and aesthetic controls; the poetic spirit, the spirit of the artist gone totally mad with the intoxicating, surrealistic power of destruction. Once

we destroy everything, nothing can stop us! Since the beginning of recorded time, God has gotten in the way of the artistic human spirit, has been the “eternal obstructor” to us being total self-creators. Now the tables are turned. With the advent of the *false postmodernity* announced by Nietzsche, we have entered “the decisive moment of a cosmic drama.” (20) Protagoras and Musaios have become Dionysus.

“Everything is possible,” Gilson tells us, “provided only that this creative spark which surrealism seeks to disclose deep in our being be preceded by a devastating flame.” Since “the massacre of values is necessary to create values that are really new,” André Breton’s description of “the most simple surrealist act” becomes perfectly intelligible and throws dramatic light upon the increasingly cavalier destruction of innocent life by terroristic acts of mass murder in our own day: “The most simple surrealist act consists in this: to go down into the streets, pistol in hand, and shoot at random for all you are worth, into the crowd” (21–22). *If we truly want to decrease incidences of contemporary mass murder and other acts of terrorism and totalitarianism from the contemporary West and the world, no one gives a better understanding of the nature of these phenomena and analysis of how to eradicate them than does Gilson!*

Since we human beings tend to be slow learners, Gilson notes that we have needed some time to grasp the full implications of the postmodern project. We have gotten out of the habit of talking about things like “divine law,” but we still hold onto its vestige in our enlightened, secularized appeals to “the voice of conscience” (23–25). Such appeals help us to pretend not to understand the catastrophic consequences of the grandiose sophistry of the postmodern project. If we pretend long enough that it does not exist, perhaps it will go away.

Unhappily, it will not. Gilson tells us that the father of *postmodern* man’s existential project is Sisyphus, not Prometheus. Our destiny has become “the absurd” and “truly exhausting task” of perpetual self-invention without model, purpose, or rule. Having turned ourselves into gods, we do not know what to do with our divinity.

But what will happen to us when more of us start to realize that the voice of conscience is the reflection of nothing, a convenient illusion we have

created to maintain the intoxicating joy of our own poetic and sophistic project? Even drunkards, at times, tire of their alcoholism.

Gilson admonishes us that our *postmodern* story is really quite old. He recounts the story of Samuel from the *Book of Samuel* (8:7–22) in which the Jewish people, tired of being free, asked the aging prophet Samuel to make them a king to judge them, like all other nations had. While Samuel was saddened by their request and saw it as a rejection of him as a judge, God told him to grant the people’s wish with the forewarning of the sorts of bondage that would beset them once their wish was fulfilled (26–27).

Having freed ourselves from divine rule, the necessary political consequence for postmodern man is political enslavement by a totalitarian State. Having refused to serve God, we have no one left to judge the State, no arbiter between us and the State. Hence, Gilson tells us:

In every land and in all countries, the people wait with fear and trembling for the powerful of this world to decide their lot for them. They hesitate, uncertain among the various forms of slavery which are being prepared for them. Listening with bated breath to the sounds of those countries which fall one after the other with a crash followed by a long silence, they wonder in anguish how long will last this little liberty they still possess. The waiting is so tense that many feel a vague consent to slavery secretly germinating within themselves. With growing impatience, they await the arrival of the master who will impose on them all forms of slavery starting with the most degrading of all—that of mind (28).

Finding ourselves totally free to engage in the perpetual task of endless self-creation, Gilson reports, we resemble a soldier on a twenty-four hour leave with nothing to do: totally bored in the tragic loneliness of an idle freedom we cannot productively use. (24) To Gilson’s ears, the explosion of Hiroshima resounded a solemn metaphysical assertion of *postmodern* (better had he said “postmodern falsely-so-called”) man’s statement that, while we no longer want to be God’s image, we can still be God’s caricature. While we cannot create anything, we now possess the intoxicating power to destroy everything. As a result, feeling totally empty and alone, postmodern man (actually “modern Enlightenment man on steroids) offers, to anyone willing to take it, the futile freedom he does not

know how to use. “He is ready for all the dictators, leaders of these human herds who follow them as guides and who are all finally conducted by them to the same place—the abattoir” (28–29).

So, then, now that Gilson’s analysis of our *postmodern* predicament has been told, what does he offer us in the way of a solution? Precisely the sort of advice we would expect from a true and serious philosopher. He admonishes us that we will not find the remedy for our predicament by wallowing in *postmodernity’s* evil. We will find it by courageously seeking and attacking its *metaphysical and moral* causes. “Let us not say: it is too late, and there is nothing left to do; but let us have the courage to look for the evil and the remedy where they exist” (29).

Since “falsely-so-called” *postmodernity’s* chief problem is that we have lost reason (*logos*) in touch with reality because we have lost God, Gilson tells us, our solution is simple. We will not find our reason and recover touch with reality again until we have “first found God again.” And we will not find God again without the willingness “to receive what still remains of grace today” (p. 29).

To do that, we must turn our souls again to the world, to have them measured by the being of things, not by our unbridled and unmoored poetic imaginations. *Beyond this, we add, we must first recognize that we are rational animals possessed of immortal souls!*

To do all this, as Gilson understood, we must attempt once again to inhabit the universe of St. Thomas in which the service of God and reason are compatible and produce in us order, beauty, and joy—not nausea—because, in this world, unlike the insane, postmodern Enlightenment world, the necessary condition for the existence of one does not entail the necessary destruction of the other. For, sharing the same cause as part of the same creation, the order of our freedom, thoughts, and reality complement, they do not contradict, one another.

By submitting the measure of our souls to the being of things (which, as a practical matter, for Gilson and us, simultaneously entails implicit recognition of God’s existence), Gilson knew we would have some hope of recovering our common sense and sanity and avoiding modernity’s/*postmodernity’s* slaughterhouse. We “either serve Him in spirit and in

truth,” Gilson admonishes us, “or we shall enslave ourselves ceaselessly, more and more, to the monstrous idol which we have made with our own hands to our image and likeness” (9–31).

In so doing, we need to recall Gilson’s admonition that we human beings think the way we can, not the way we wish. Analogously, this applies to the way we imagine, judge, understand, and reason. In signing on to this Manifesto, its signatories are chiefly opposing the principles presently being applied in sometimes good and sometimes bad faith by different people—causes which might produce effects that, *when abstractly considered*, might appear to them to be, and might even be, logically consistent; but, which, *when applied to reality* in an individual situation, time and place, can never generate a really doable deed by this or that person or group.

Abstract conceptual non-contradictions very often wind up being real contradictions that cannot cause the intended actions we seek when we try to execute them in reality. As a result, sometimes those who appear to be our best friends wind up being our worst enemies; and sometimes those who appear to be our worst enemies actually become our best friends. For this reason, we welcome civil and constructively intended criticism of any of the points we have made in this Manifesto and in the tactical principles we articulate below to realize its strategic ends.

This Manifesto's Principles of Action to
Counteract Growing Political Totalitarianism, Its
Denial of Civil Liberties, Natural Moral Law, and
Its Disrespect for Natural Human Rights and
Human Dignity

A Brief Historical Report of the Polish Solidarity Movement as a Preamble to the Tactical Principles of the GCSU

In reaction to just the sort of totalitarian world situation that Adler, Merton, Lewis, and Gilson had described above, several decades ago the Polish people sought to liberate themselves from the Totalitarian Gulag to which, for decades, they had been subjected to live, this Manifesto seeks to articulate in what follows principles for a practical plan of action analogously, on a global scale, to imitate the Polish *Solidarity Movement* model that worked to help restore an increase of civil rights in Poland toward the end of the 20th century.

Formally founded on 22 September 1980, when delegates of 36 regional trade unions met in Gdańsk (previously the Free City of Danzig), the now world-famous Polish *Solidarity* trade union (STU) organized itself under its Polish name: *Solidarność*. In so doing, the STU became the first independent labor union in a Soviet bloc nation.

During a growing wave of new strikes in 1980 protesting rising food prices, under the leadership of Lech Wałęsa, the Lenin Shipyards in Gdańsk became an organized center of resistance to government *mandates* after approximately 17,000 workers had organized a strike and barricaded themselves within the plant. Shortly after this, in mid-August, 1980, the STU helped organized an Inter-factory Strike Committee (ISC) to help coordinate *rapidly spreading strikes* in different locations at a short notice.

By early 1981, the STU had about 10 million members and represented most of Poland's workers; and before the end of August of the same year, the ISC had presented the Polish government with a list of demands in the form of a Charter of Workers' Rights (CWR). On August 31, the government and the Gdańsk strikers had reached an agreement allowing the existence of "free and independent unions with the right to strike, together with greater freedom of religious and political expression."

Throughout the remaining few months of 1981, *Solidarity* organized against the Soviet-controlled government led by General Wojciech Jaruzelski by engaging in increasingly stronger, more numerous, controlled strikes, immediately followed by increasing demands for economic reforms and increased civil liberties—including free elections and trade-union involvement in highest-level, national, political decision making. Under growing pressure from his Soviet overlords to gain political control over the situation in Poland, in a bid to crush the *Solidarity* movement, on 13 December 1981, Jaruzelski's government: (1) imposed martial law nationally; (2) declared *Solidarity* illegal; (3) arrested its leaders. On October 8, 1982, it had the Polish Parliament (the Sejm) formally dissolve the STU.

Nonetheless, for seven years *Solidarity* remained in existence as an underground organization and opposition political movement. In 1989, *Solidarity* led a new wave of coordinated strikes and labor unrest across Poland. Among the strikers' major demands was government recognition of *Solidarity*. In April 1989, the government agreed to legalize *Solidarity* and allow it to participate in free elections to a bicameral Polish parliament. While *Solidarity's* political influence thereafter diminished, this was only because the STU had helped Poles recover previously lost civil liberties and give birth to a multitude of new political parties.

Tactical Principles of the GCSU

1. The signatories and affiliate organizations involved in cooperating to generate this historic, Global Renaissance Manifesto present this history of the Polish *Solidarity Movement* as a model of the following commonsense political principles for us to apply and emulate in our own day so as to reverse the increasingly growing power, and numbers, of totalitarian political governments coming into being worldwide.

2. These signatories and affiliate organizations agree to send this Manifesto to, and ask to support our cause, the following:

A. National and international leaders of different unions and organizations who have refused to cave into Covid-19 mandates—like hospital workers, airline workers, police, firefighters, military, religious, and so on—and ask them to sign on to this manifesto, tell their membership about it, and ask them to join us, become a member of GCSU.

B. Talented writers and speakers, philosophers, theologians, poets: liberal artists of different sorts who know how to recognize, and use their talent to fight, propaganda and support our cause.

C. Politicians and people with political influence who agree with our principles and are willing to support our work.

D. Journals, periodicals, and media outlets of different kinds to spread our message.

E. Any person or organization we can think of who might be able to assist us in our efforts.

3. These signatories and affiliate organizations also further agree to cooperate:

A. To create a GCSU website, an international board of directors and board of advisors from as many professional fields, countries, as possible.

The board should have solid scholars from several disciplines—including: medicine/biology/virology and the like, including religious leaders and clergy from all over the world.

B. To include within this website the following:

(i) a place where other scholars and other professionals and supporters can sign the Manifesto;

(ii) a section with useful material divided by discipline and topics (philosophy, theology, law, medicine, virology, epidemiology, etc.; adverse effects, overall mortality rate, green pass policies, human rights violations, early treatments, etc.);

(iii) a division section for scholarly articles;

(iv) an international news page from different countries with at least one associate editor from each country) with key news and links to like-minded, and not-so-like-minded groups/associations

(v) even if only for cultural purposes, a page with information about the Nuremberg trial, to be composed over the next few years, to help show the long-term effects of the present Covid-19 madness and help prevent this insanity from ever happening again;

C. To create a quarterly online Journal/Review, and perhaps an annual hard copy of the quarterly articles.

D. If possible, to involve a charitable organization to help secure donations for us so that we might be soon in a position to pay collaborators and website maintenance.

E. To form a group of GCSU Fellows and Senior Fellows to publish newspaper editorials and give radio, TV, and blogsite interviews; and perhaps develop our own media in these areas.

F. To establish a fund of some kind to help: 1) police, firefighters, military members, and others who put conscience and the public good first; and 2) members of the general public whose health has been damaged through vaccine mandates and/or forced vaccination.

G. To establish an online *Global Commonsense University* rooted in the uncommon commonsense philosophical principles that we have reported and in this Manifesto to: 1) replace the failed Enlightenment colleges and universities whose professors have been a chief cause of the cultural mess in which we currently find ourselves; 2) produce future world leaders with the uncommon commonsense wisdom and prudence that the world sorely needs today and will need tomorrow.

H. Finally, to establish within this University an International Humanist Center for Global Leadership and World Peace led by our faculty, students, and graduates.

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