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**THE NATURAL FAMILY:  
A MANIFESTO**



*By Allan C. Carlson & Paul T. Mero*

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# **THE NATURAL FAMILY: A MANIFESTO**

*By Allan C. Carlson & Paul T. Mero*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>The Story of the Family</i> .....	1
<i>A Time of Crisis</i> .....	5
<i>A Vision</i> .....	13
<i>Our Principles</i> .....	15
<i>Our Platform</i> .....	18
<i>On Liberty</i> .....	23
<i>The Usual Charges</i> .....	24
<i>Our Allies</i> .....	30
<i>Looking Forward</i> .....	33
<i>The Call</i> .....	35

**W**hat is the natural family? The answer comes to the woman and the man who take the risk of turning their love into promises of lifelong devotion.

In doing so, they will discover the story of the family, at once an ideal vision and a universal reality. In our time, they will also sense crisis, for malignant forces tear at the common source of freedom, order, virtue, and children. To set things right, they will need to look for clear principles, open goals, and a firm course of action. They also will need to reject false charges and weak compromise. Still, through these acts they shall come to know true liberty, a rekindled hearth, and a real homecoming, for themselves and for all humankind.

## THE STORY OF THE FAMILY

**A** young man and a young woman draw toward each other. They yearn to be as one. When they see the other, broad smiles appear. They sense the possibility of joy. Alone, they feel partial, incomplete. When together, they feel whole. The people among whom they live bless this bond in the celebration of marriage. The man and the woman exchange public vows with each other, and also with their kindred and neighbors, and the two become one flesh.

Over time, their joy and passion will be tested by the twists and surprises of life. They will cry together,

sometimes in happiness, sometimes in sorrow. They will face sickness; they may know poverty; they could face dislocation or natural disaster; they might be torn apart by war. In times of despair or loss, they will find strength in each other. Facing death, they will feel the warm spiritual balm that heals the pain of physical separation. The conjugal bond built on fidelity, mutual duty, and respect allows both of them to emerge into their full potential; they become as their Creator intended, a being complete.

This marriage creates a new family, a home, the first and fundamental unit of human society. Here, husband and wife build a small economy. They share the work of provisioning, drawing on each one's interests, strengths, and skills. They craft a home which becomes a special place on earth. In centuries past, the small farm or the artisan's shop was the usual expression of this union between the sexual and the economic. Today, the urban townhouse, apartment, or suburban home are more common. Still, the small home economy remains the vital center of daily existence.

The wife and husband also build their home as a spiritual place. They learn that family and faith are, in fact, two sides of the same coin. The vital home rests on reverence, worship, and prayer.

From this same natural union flows new human life. Children are the first end, or purpose, of marriage. The

couple watch with wonder as their first baby grows within the mother. Joy and awe drive away doubt and fear as they find their love transformed into a living child. Parts of their own beings have gone into the child's making, forming a new and unique person. The new father takes on the protection of the new mother in her time of vulnerability and dependence. A happiness follows the trial of childbirth as the new mother nurses her baby and as the father caresses his first born. Receiving a child through adoption sparks similar feelings. From such amazing moments, these parents are the child's first teachers; their home, the child's first, most vital school. They pass to the child the skills of living and introduce the satisfactions of talking, reading, reasoning, and exploring the world.

Inspired by love, the couple opens its union to additional children, filling their home, and filling the earth. These parents will know the delight of watching brothers and sisters grow together. They will watch with a mix of pride and worry as their children take their first steps, attempt their first chores, take on their first responsibilities. Among the children, there will be bruised knees, quarrels over toys, lost sport contests, tears, and laughter. As the children grow, they enter by steps a broader world. In all this, though, their parents stand as guides and guardians, and the home serves as a shelter and the focus of their common life.

Indeed, the natural family opens its home to other kin. The love and care which flow from parents to young children are mirrored in the care and love that adult children give to their aging parents. The truly rich family draws on the strengths of three or more generations. This family cares for its own. Each generation sees itself as a link in an unbroken chain, through which the family extends from and into the centuries.

In all this, the natural family opens the portals to the good life, to true happiness, even to bliss. Enmeshed in the lives of others, family members craft acts of altruism, where they make gifts without thought of self. Kindness begets kindness, shaping an economy of love. Kindred share all that they have, without expecting any return, only to receive more than they could ever have imagined. This is the love that brings radiant smiles to new mothers and gratifies fathers as they watch their children grow into young men and women of character. This is the affection that fosters charity, good works, and true community. This is the grace whereby the bereaved say farewell to those whose years on earth have been fulfilled, who have been called to another state.

Just political life also flows out of natural family homes. True sovereignty originates here. These homes are the source of ordered liberty, the fountain of real democracy,

the seedbed of virtue. Neighborhoods and villages initially express this broader political life, through which families police themselves without violating the autonomy of homes. The ideal government, in this sense, is local. Even a nation “is nothing but the aggregate of the families within its borders.”<sup>i</sup> States exist to protect families and to encourage family growth and integrity.

## A TIME OF CRISIS

**A**nd yet, the natural family—*part of the created order, imprinted on our natures, the source of bountiful joy, the fountain of new life, the bulwark of ordered liberty*—stands reviled and threatened in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Foes have mounted attacks on all aspects of the natural family, from the bond of marriage to the birth of children to the true democracy of free homes. Ever more families show weaknesses and disorders. We see growing numbers of young adults rejecting the fullness and joy of marriage, choosing instead cheap substitutes or standing alone, where they are easy prey for the total state. Too many children are born outside of wedlock, ending as wards of that same state. Too few children are born inside married-couple homes, portending depopulation.

What has caused this alienation of humankind from its true nature and real home? Two basic assaults on the natural family have occurred, with their roots reaching back several hundred years: in brief, the challenge of industrialism and the assault of new, family-denying ideas.

On the one hand, the triumph of industrialism brought a “great disruption”<sup>ii</sup> or a “great transformation”<sup>iii</sup> in human affairs. The creation of wealth accelerated under the regime of industry. Yet this real gain rested on tearing productivity away from the hearth, on a disruption of the natural ecology of family life. The primal bond of home and work appeared to dissolve into air. Family-made goods and tasks became commodities, things to be bought and sold. Centralized factories, offices, and warehouses took over the tasks of the family workshop, garden, kitchen, and storeroom. Husbands, wives, and even children were enticed out of homes and organized in factories according to the principle of efficiency. Impersonal machines undermined the natural complementarity of the sexes in productive tasks. Children were left to fend for themselves, with the perception that their families no longer guided their futures; rather, the children now looked to faceless employers.

Politicians also embraced the industrial ideal and its claims to efficiency. New laws denied children a family-

centered education and put them in mass state schools. Fertility tumbled, for “it...has yet to be [shown]...that any society can sustain stable high fertility beyond two generations of mass schooling.”<sup>iv</sup> The state also invaded the home, seizing the protection of childhood from parents through the reform school movement and later schemes to “prevent child abuse.” Family households, formerly function-rich beehives of useful, productive work and mutual support, tended to become merely functionless, overnight places of rest for persons whose active lives and loyalties lay elsewhere.

More critically, new ideas emerged over the same years that rejected the natural family. Some political thinkers held that the individual, standing alone, was the true cell of society; that family bonds—including those between husband and wife and between mother and child—showed merely the power of one selfish person over another.<sup>v</sup> Other theorists argued that the isolated self, the lone actor in “the state of nature,” was actually oppressed by institutions such as family and church. In this view, the central state was twisted into a supposed agent of liberation. It alone could free the enslaved individual from “the chains of tradition.”<sup>vi</sup> From these premises emerged a terrible cloud of ideologies that shared a common target: the natural family. These idea systems included socialism,

feminism, communism, sexual hedonism, racial nationalism, and secular liberalism.

They coalesced, as never before, around the French Revolution. Its partisans spread these ideas—or their seeds—through Europe, and they carried over time around the globe. A great war—a war over the nature of the social order—consumed the years 1789-1815. The terrible disruption of families and the deaths of millions followed.

Advocates for the natural family—figures such as Bonald<sup>vii</sup> and Burke<sup>viii</sup>—fought back. They defended the “little platoons” of social life, most of all the home. They rallied the ideas that would show again the necessity of the natural family. They revealed the nature of organic society to be a community of free homes.

Meanwhile, a great alliance finally crushed the revolutionary force of France. In the restoration, easy divorce—introduced by The Revolution—was banned again. Families reclaimed authority. The new, growing middle class soon crafted a moral order centered around the hearth and the mother in the home. More broadly, religious leaders and social reformers worked successfully to tame the industrial impulse. The productive wonders of the factory system should be welcomed, they reasoned. However, the working family could still be sheltered. They praised family-held corporations, where social and religious

sentiment might soften the imperative of efficiency. And they embraced the ideal of the “family wage,” through which the industrial sector could claim only one adult per family, the father, who in turn had the natural right to a living wage that would also sustain a mother and children at home in decency. Family wage regimes blossomed in Western Europe, the Americas, and Australia-New Zealand.

A century later, though, this new balance unraveled again. The horrific conflict called World War I began over political rivalries and fears. However, its carnage yielded the unintended effects of multiplying the power of industrial managers and of releasing once more those ideologies sharing a fierce hostility to the natural family. Factory production for war swept aside the claims of small property and local community. The new feminists turned away from motherhood and children and refocused on a legalistic and sterile equality. The secular liberals swept through a disheartened Europe with their post-Christian message of self-absorption. The new Malthusians pressed their grim argument that children were the cause of misery and war. And the sexual hedonists laid claim to the morals of the disenchanting young. Most terribly, communists won control of Russia in 1917 and quickly moved to eliminate the family. Five years later, the fascists triumphed in Italy, along with their elevation of state and war over home and family.

In 1933, national socialism came to power in Germany and tore families apart in its quest for racial empire.

For 74 years (1917-91), another great conflict over the nature of the social order occurred. Those nations holding (sometimes tenuously) to a democracy built on the natural family ideal—consistently Australia, France, Great Britain, New Zealand, and the United States—engaged the totalitarians. Open conflict (sometimes involving awkward alliances) could be found during the Russian Civil War, the Second World War, and, later, in places such as Korea and Vietnam. “Cold” wars filled the years in between. Over 140 million persons perished at the hands of anti-family totalitarians.

And yet, by 1991 and the collapse of the Soviet Union, nazism, fascism, and communism in Europe lay vanquished. The democratic, family-centered nations had won. However, they did so only to find that the other idea systems also unleashed by the disaster of World War I—a leveling feminism, sexual hedonism, new Malthusianism, and militant secularism—had won power in their own homelands. They also found science careening, without moral control, into the most intimate sexual acts. Even the making of new life, the unique and vital marital task, had fallen into the “brave new world” of the lab and factory.

The temporal “hinge,” it turns out, had been the mid-

1960's. Among all Western nations, we find in these few years common events: new legal challenges to successful family wage systems; conscious efforts to drive the Creator out of civic life; the rapid spread of pornography; new demands for easy divorce; attacks on the meaning of "wife" and "husband"; a swelling rhetoric of "gender" and "sexual" rights; conscious state campaigns aimed at population control; steps toward easy abortion; claims of sexual revolution; rejection of the concepts of duty and long-term commitment; and startling advances in the manipulation of human life. Americans call this time of moral shock and awe "the Sixties," but the campaign carried through the next decade, as well.

Indeed, by 1980, the forces arrayed against the natural family could claim many victories in the Western world. Almost everywhere, abortion on demand reinforced state campaigns to discourage marriage and reduce family size. "No-fault" divorce and "marriage penalties" in tax and welfare laws weakened the very foundation of social order. The number of divorces soared. An imposition of full "gender equality" destroyed family-wage systems; the real wages of fathers fell sharply; young mothers returned to the factories and offices with their diminishing number of children turned over to state-funded day care. "Sex education" in the schools mocked chastity and fidelity and

encouraged experimentation. Homosexuality gained status as a legitimate “sexual preference.” Social Security systems came to favor childlessness and to penalize larger families. Tax systems now punished childbearing within marriage, while welfare states rewarded unwed motherhood. Marital fertility plummeted; illegitimate births soared. And these same forces purged the Creator from most public squares.

By the 1990’s, their campaign was global. Cynically, they used the International Year of the Family, 1994, to launch a series of United Nations conferences designed to tear down the natural family in the developing nations, as well. Cairo, Beijing, Istanbul, and Copenhagen were the arenas where they tried to impose this “post-family” order.

However, they forgot one truth: “the institution of the home is the one anarchist institution....It is the only check on the state that is bound to renew itself as eternally as the state, and more naturally than the state.”<sup>ix</sup> As the culture turned hostile, natural families jolted back to awareness. Signs of renewal came from new leaders and the growth of movements, popularly called “pro-life” and “pro-family,” which arose to defend the natural family. By the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, these—our—movements could claim some modest gains. However, both movements were hampered by their reactive or defensive posture and by a reliance on political action in great central capitals.

In our time, the partisans of a “post-family” world are

still the ones on the offensive. For example, our pro-family movement has failed to restore legal protection to marriage by rolling back the “no-fault” revolution. Instead, by 2005, we are in a desperate fight simply to keep the vital institution of marriage from being fitted to homosexuals. And our two movements have failed to slow the war of governments on human fertility, despite the new likelihood of a catastrophic depopulation of the developed *and* developing nations through the global “empty cradle.”<sup>x</sup>

## A VISION

**A**nd so, we advance here a new vision and a fresh statement of principles and goals appropriate for the 21st century and the third millennium.

We see a world restored in line with the intent of its Creator. We envision a culture—found both locally and universally—that upholds the marriage of a woman to a man, and a man to a woman, as the central aspiration for the young. This culture affirms marriage as the best path to health, security, fulfillment, and joy. It casts the home built on marriage as the source of true political sovereignty, the fountain of democracy. It also holds the household framed by marriage to be the primal economic unit, a place marked by rich activity, material abundance, and broad self-reliance.

This culture treasures private property in family hands as the rampart of independence and liberty. It celebrates the marital sexual union as the unique source of new human life. We see these homes as open to a full quiver of children, the source of family continuity and social growth. We envision young women growing into wives, homemakers, and mothers; and we see young men growing into husbands, homebuilders, and fathers.

We see true happiness as the product of persons enmeshed in vital bonds with spouses, children, parents, and kin. We look to a landscape of family homes, lawns, and gardens busy with useful tasks and ringing with the laughter of many children. We envision parents as the first educators of their children. We see homes that also embrace extended family members who need special care due to age or infirmity. We view neighborhoods, villages, and townships as the second locus of political sovereignty. We envision a freedom of commerce that respects and serves family integrity. And we look to nation-states that hold the protection of the natural family to be their first responsibility.

## OUR PRINCIPLES

To advance this vision, we advocates for the natural family assert clear principles to guide our work in the new century and millennium.

- We affirm that the natural family, not the individual, is the fundamental unit of society.
- We affirm the natural family to be the union of a man and a woman through marriage for the purposes of sharing love and joy, propagating children, providing their moral education, building a vital home economy, offering security in times of trouble, and binding the generations.
- We affirm that the natural family is a fixed aspect of the created order, one ingrained in human nature. Distinct family systems may grow weaker or stronger. However, the natural family cannot change into some new shape; nor can it be re-defined by eager social engineers.
- We affirm that the natural family is the ideal, optimal, true family system. While we acknowledge varied living situations caused by circumstance or dysfunction, all other “family forms” are incomplete or are fabrications of the state.
- We affirm the marital union to be the authentic sexual bond, the only one open to the natural and responsible creation of new life.

- We affirm the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death; each newly conceived person holds rights to live, to grow, to be born, and to share a home with its natural parents bound by marriage.
- We affirm that the natural family is prior to the state and that legitimate governments exist to shelter and encourage the natural family.
- We affirm that the world is abundant in resources. The breakdown of the natural family and moral and political failure, not human “overpopulation,” account for poverty, starvation, and environmental decay.
- We affirm that human depopulation is the true demographic danger facing the earth in this new century. Our societies need more people, not fewer.
- We affirm that women and men are equal in dignity and innate human rights, but different in function. Even if sometimes thwarted by events beyond the individual’s control (or sometimes given up for a religious vocation), the calling of each boy is to become husband and father; the calling of each girl is to become wife and mother. Everything that a man does is mediated by his aptness for fatherhood. Everything that a woman does is mediated by her aptness for motherhood.<sup>Xi</sup> Culture, law, and policy should take these differences into account.

- We affirm that the complementarity of the sexes is a source of strength. Men and women exhibit profound biological and psychological differences. When united in marriage, though, the whole becomes greater than the sum of the parts.
- We affirm that economic determinism is false. Ideas and religious faith can prevail over material forces. Even one as powerful as industrialization can be tamed by the exercise of human will.
- We affirm the “family wage” ideal of “equal pay for equal family responsibility.” Compensation for work and taxation should reinforce natural family bonds.
- We affirm the necessary role of private property in land, dwelling, and productive capital as the foundation of familial independence and the guarantor of democracy. In a just and good society, all families will hold real property.
- And we affirm that lasting solutions to human problems rise out of families and small communities. They cannot be imposed by bureaucratic and judicial fiat. Nor can they be coerced by outside force.

## OUR PLATFORM

**F**rom these principles, we draw out a simple, concrete platform for the new century and millennium. To the world, we say:

- We will build a new culture of marriage, where others would define marriage out of existence.
- We will welcome and celebrate more babies and larger families, where others would continue a war on human fertility.
- We will find ways to bring mothers, fathers, and children back home, where others would further divide parents from their children.
- And we will create true home economies, where others would subject families to the full control of big government and vast corporations.

To do these things, we must offer positive encouragements, and we must also correct the policy errors of the past.

Specifically:

### **To build a new culture of marriage...**

- We will craft schooling that gives positive images of chastity, marriage, fidelity, motherhood, fatherhood, husbandry, and housewifery. We will end the corruption of children through state “sex education” programs.
- We will build legal and constitutional protections around marriage as the union of a man and a woman.

We will end the war of the sexual hedonists on marriage.

- We will transform social insurance, welfare, and housing programs to reinforce marriage, especially the marriage of young adults. We will end state incentives to live outside of marriage.
- We will place the weight of the law on the side of spouses seeking to defend their marriages. We will end state preferences for easy divorce by repealing “no-fault” statutes.
- We will recognize marriage as a true and full economic partnership. We will end “marriage penalties” in taxation.
- We will allow private insurers to recognize the health advantages of marriage and family living, according to sound business principles. We will end legal discrimination against the married and child-rich.
- We will empower the legal and cultural guardians of marriage and public morality. We will end the coarsening of our culture.

**To welcome more babies within marriage...**

- We will praise churches and other groups that provide healthy and fertile models of family life to the young. We will end state programs that indoctrinate children,

youth, and adults into the contraceptive mentality.

- We will restore respect for life. We will end the culture of abortion and the mass slaughter of the innocents.
- We will create private and public campaigns to reduce maternal and infant mortality and to improve family health. We will end government campaigns of population control.
- We will build special protections for families, motherhood, and childhood. We will end the terrible assault on these basic human rights.
- We will celebrate husbands and wives who hold open their sexual lives to new children. We will end the manipulation and abuse of new human life in the laboratories.
- We will craft generous tax deductions, exemptions, and credits that are tied to marriage and the number of children. We will end the oppressive taxation of family income, labor, property, and wealth.
- We will create credits against payroll taxes that reward the birth of children and that build true family patrimonies. We will end existing social insurance incentives toward childlessness.
- We will offer tax benefits to businesses that provide “natal gifts” and “child allowances” to their

employees. We will end legal incentives that encourage business corporations to ignore families.

**To bring mothers, and fathers, home...**

- We will ensure that stay-at-home parents enjoy at least the same state benefits offered to day-care users. We will end all discriminations against stay-at-home parents.
- We will encourage new strategies and technologies that would allow home-based employment to blossom and prosper. We will end policies that unfairly favor large, centralized businesses and institutions.
- We will favor small property that reintegrates home and work. We will end taxes, financial incentives, subsidies, and zoning laws that discourage small farms and family-held businesses.

**To create a true home economy...**

- We will allow men and women to live in harmony with their true natures. We will end the aggressive state promotion of androgyny.
- We will encourage employers to pay a “family wage” to heads of households. We will end laws that

prohibit employers from recognizing and rewarding family responsibility.

- We will craft laws that protect home schools and other family-centered schools from state interference. We will give real control of state schools to small communities so that their focus might turn toward home and family. And we will create measures (such as educational tax credits) that recognize the exercise of parental responsibility. We will end discriminatory taxes and policies that favor mass state education of the young.
- We will hold up the primacy of parental rights and hold public officials accountable for abuses of their power. We will end abuse of the “child-abuse” laws.
- We will encourage self-sufficiency through broad property ownership, home enterprise, home gardens, and home workshops. We will end the culture of dependency found in the welfare state.
- We will celebrate homes that are centers of useful work. We will end state incentives for home building that assume, and so create, families without functions.

## ON LIBERTY

Through all these tasks, we seek to advance true freedom. The partisans of a “post family” world have taught that liberty means freedom *from* tradition, *from* religious faith, *from* family, *from* community. They also hold that freedom is a gift of the state. We deny these statements. Rather, true liberty comes from the ability of human beings, of women and men, to find their real destinies, in their ability to live in harmony with the created world. Real freedom lies in holding the power to engage in “the pursuit of happiness,” which the American Founders properly understood to mean “domestic happiness,” the joys of marriage and home life.<sup>xii</sup> True liberty rests on family ownership of real, productive property. Political liberty includes freedom from the modern social engineers, who would create their own artificial orders based on social class, or racism, or the violence of androgyny (the negation of woman and man). In truth, human beings are made to be conjugal, to live in homes with vital connections to parents, spouse, and children. Authentic freedom comes in and through the natural family.

## THE USUAL CHARGES

**W**e know that certain charges will be leveled against us. Some will say that we want to turn back the clock, to restore a mythical American suburban world of the 1950's. Others will charge that we seek to subvert the rights of women or that we want to impose white, Western, Christian values on a pluralistic world. Still others will argue that we ignore science or reinforce patriarchal violence. Some will say that we block inevitable social evolution or threaten a sustainable world with too many children.

So, in anticipation, let us be clear:

**We look forward with hope, while learning from the past.**

It is true that we look with affection to earlier familial eras such as "1950's America." Indeed, for the first time in one hundred years, five things happened simultaneously in America (and in Australia and parts of Western Europe, as well) during this time: the marriage rate climbed; the divorce rate fell; marital fertility soared; the equality of households increased; and measures of child well-being and adult happiness rose. These were the social achievements of "the greatest generation." We look with delight on this record and aspire to recreate such results.

However, we also know that this specific development was a one-generation wonder. It did not last. Some children of the “baby boom” rebelled. Too often, this rebellion was foolish and destructive. Still, we find weaknesses in the family model of “1950’s America.” We see that it was largely confined to the white majority. Black families actually showed mounting stress in these years: a retreat from marriage; more out-of-wedlock births.<sup>xiii</sup> Also, this new suburban model—featuring long commutes for fathers and tract homes without the central places such as parks and nearby shops where mothers and youth might have found healthy community bonds—proved incomplete. Finally, we see the “companionship marriage” ideal of this time, which embraced psychological tasks to the exclusion of material and religious functions, as fragile. We can, and we will, do better.

**We believe wholeheartedly in women’s rights.**

Above all, we believe in rights that recognize women’s unique gifts of pregnancy, birthing, and breastfeeding. The goal of androgyny, the effort to eliminate real differences between women and men, does every bit as much violence to human nature and human rights as the old efforts by the communists to create “Soviet Man” and by the nazis to create “Aryan Man.” We reject social engineering, attempts to corrupt girls and boys, to confuse women and

men about their true identities. At the same time, nothing in our platform would prevent women from seeking and attaining as much education as they want. Nothing in our platform would prevent women from entering jobs and professions to which they aspire. We do object, however, to restrictions on the liberty of employers to recognize family relations and obligations and so reward indirectly those parents staying at home to care for their children. And we object to current attacks on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a document which proclaims fundamental rights to family autonomy, to a family wage for fathers, and to the special protection of mothers.<sup>xiv</sup>

**We believe that the natural family is universal, an attribute of all humankind.**

We confess to holding Christian values regarding the family: the sanctity of marriage; the desire by the Creator that we be fruitful and multiply; Jesus' miracle at the wedding feast; His admonitions against adultery and divorce. And yet, we find similar views in the other great world faiths. Moreover, we even find recognition of the natural family in the marriage rituals of animists. Because it is imprinted on our natures as human beings, we know that the natural family can be grasped by all persons who open their minds to the evidence of their senses and their hearts

to the promptings of their best instincts. Also, in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, there is little that is “Western” about our views. The voices of the “post family” idea are actually today’s would-be “Westernizers.” They are the ones who largely rule in the child-poor, aging, dying lands of “the European West.” It is they who seek to poison the rest of the world with a grim, wizened culture of death. Our best friends are actually to be found in the developing world, in the Third World, in the Middle East, Africa, South Asia, South America. Our staunchest allies tend not to be white, but rather people of color. Others seek a sterile, universal darkness. We seek to liberate the whole world—including dying Europa—for light and life, for children.

**We celebrate the findings of empirical science.**

Science, honestly done and honestly reported, is the friend of the natural family. The record is clear from decades of work in sociology, psychology, anthropology, sociobiology, medicine, and social history: children do best when they are born into and raised by their two natural parents. Under *any* other setting—including one-parent, step-parent, homosexual, cohabitating, or communal households—children predictably do worse. Married, natural-parent homes bring health, learning, and success to the offspring reared therein. Science shows that these same

homes give life, wealth, and joy to wives and husbands, as well. Disease, depression, and early death come to those who reject family life.<sup>XV</sup> This result should not really cause surprise. Science, after all, is the study of the natural order. And while the Creator forgives, nature never does.

**We seek to reduce domestic violence.**

All families fall short of perfection and a few families fail. We, too, worry about domestic violence. We know that people can make bad choices, that they can fall prey to selfishness and their darker instincts. We also know that persons can live in places or times where they have few models of solid homes, few examples of good marriages. All the same, we also insist that the natural family is not the source of these human failures. The research here is clear. Women are safest physically when married and living with their husbands. Children are best sheltered from sexual, physical, and emotional abuse when they live with their married natural parents. In short, the natural family is the *answer* to abuse. We also know that all husbands and wives, all mothers and fathers, need to be nurtured toward and encouraged in their proper roles. These are the first tasks of all worthy social institutions.

**We believe that while distinct family systems change, the design of the natural family never does.**

Regarding the natural family, we deny any such thing as social evolution. The changes we see are either decay away from or renewal toward the one true family model. From our very origin as a unique creature on earth, we humans have been defined by the long-term bonding of a woman and a man, by their free sharing of resources, by a complementary division of labor, and by a focus on the procreation, protection, and rearing of children in stable homes.<sup>xvi</sup> History is replete with examples of distinct family systems that have grown strong and built great civilizations, only to fall to atomism, vice, and decay. Even in our Western Civilization, we can identify periods of family decline and disorder, followed by successful movements of renewal.<sup>xvii</sup> It is true that the last forty years have been a time of great confusion and decay. We now sense a new summons to social rebirth.

**We seek a sustainable human future.**

With sadness, we acknowledge that the new Malthusian impulse has succeeded in its war against children all too well. Fertility is tumbling around the globe. A majority of nations have already fallen into “the aging trap” of depopulation. As matters now stand, the

predictable future is one of catastrophic population decline, economic contraction, and human tragedy. Our agenda actually represents the earth's best hope for a sustainable future.

## OUR ALLIES

**H**ow do we relate to other movements or campaigns to protect the family? The conservative intellectual and political movement in America, for example, has claimed in recent decades a philosophy of "fusionism": economic conservatives holding to free market capitalism "fused" to social conservatives focused on "life" and "family" questions, or "traditional values." At times, this fusionist approach has worked well politically. And it has shown real economic results in those family businesses that successfully balance the pursuit of profit and the integrity of homes (including the homes of their employees).

However, we also see that the interests of "big business" and of families are not always compatible. Unless guided by other ideals, for example, the great corporations seek cheap labor wherever it can be found and an end to all home production, from clothing to meal preparation to child care. The whetting of appetites commonly takes precedence over family integrity in corporate advertising. As "globalization" now shows, families are not immune to

capitalism's "creative destruction."

We admire and support truly free markets and equitable trade. We praise companies that grasp their long-term interest in strong homes and that craft advertising with positive family images. But we also indict legal privileges and special benefits bestowed on large corporations that buy political access and power to the damage of families. In addition, we point to an inherent dilemma in capitalist economics: the short-term interests of individual corporations in weak homes (places focused on consumption rather than productive tasks) and universal adult employment (mothers and fathers alike) versus the long-term interest of national economies in improved *human capital*. This latter term means happy, healthy, intelligent, and productive young adults, "products" that cannot be shaped by day-care centers, let alone by childless homes. "Fusionist conservatism" tends to paper over such inherent tensions. We put families first. We see any economy and all of its components—from financial markets to rules of trade to the setting of wages—as servants of the natural family, not the other way around.

We also claim an alliance with the "pro family" and "pro life" movements of recent decades. Indeed, we might be called part of them (in modest ways). But we also see (and so confess to) weaknesses that have marred their

effectiveness. Too often, individual ambitions and squabbles have prevented movement success. A narrowness of vision has led, at times, to a focus on petty questions, while the truly important battles have been ignored, and so lost by default. Strategic thinking and bold moves that could transform key debates have been undone by timidity on the part of leaders and funders. Sustaining large institutions, rather than encouraging swift and effective agents, has been too common. Money, particularly “direct mail” money, has become the measure of too many things. Doctrinal and sectarian differences on important, but tangential, questions have been allowed to obscure unity on the central issues of family and life. Our foes have celebrated as old fears and suspicions between religious groups have trumped potentially powerful new alliances. The initiative on most questions has been left to the other side.

At this juncture, we do insist on “pro-family” integrity. Our true allies will accept the whole case for the natural family, not just parts. One cannot affirm the natural family while also defending serial divorce or infant day care. Our real allies will be those who, as far as possible, align their own lives in accord with the created order.

We also believe that victory for the natural family will come only as we change the terms of debate and open

ourselves to fresh coalitions. It is not enough to stop public recognition of “gay marriage,” nor to oppose “safe sex education” in the public schools, nor to ban partial birth abortion, nor to create optional “covenant” marriages. These gains will have no lasting effect unless the natural family is freed from the oppression of the post-family ideologues, unless we build a broad culture of marriage and life.

## LOOKING FORWARD

**T**hat large task requires new ways of thinking and acting. Our vision of the hearth looks forward, not to the past, for hope and purpose. We see the vital home reborn through startling new movements such as home schooling. We marvel at fresh inventions that portend novel bonds between home and work. We are inspired by a convergence of religious truth with the evidence of science around the vital role of the natural family. We see the prospect of a great civil alliance of religious orthodoxies, within nations and around the globe; not to compromise on doctrines held dear, but to defend our family systems from the common foe. With wonder, we find a shared happiness with people once distrusted or feared. We enjoy new friendships rooted in family ideals that cross ancient divides. We see the opportunity for an abundant world

order built on the natural family.

We issue a special call to the young, those born over the last three to four decades. You are the children of a troubled age, a time of moral and social disorder. You were conceived into a culture of self-indulgence, of abortion, a culture embracing death. More than all generations before, you have known the divorce of parents. You have lived too often in places without fathers. You have been taught to deny your destinies as young women and young men. You have been forced to read books that mock marriage, motherhood, and fatherhood. Persons who should have protected you—teachers, judges, public officials—often left you as prey to moral and sexual predators. Many of you are in fact the victims of a kind of cultural rape: seduced into early sexual acts, then pushed into sterility.

And yet, you are also the ones with the power to make the world anew. Where some members of *our* generation helped to corrupt the world, you will be the builders. You have seen the darkness. The light now summons you. It is your time to lead, with the natural family as your standard and beacon. Banish the lies told to you. Claim your natural freedom to create true and fruitful marriages. Learn from the social renewal prompted by “the greatest generation” and call on them for special support. You have the chance to shape a world that welcomes and

celebrates children. You have the ability to craft a true homecoming. Your generation holds the destiny of humankind in its hands. The hopes of all good and decent people lie with you.

## THE CALL

**A** new spirit spreads in the world, the essence of the natural family. We call on all people of goodwill, whose hearts are open to the promptings of this spirit, to join in a great campaign. The time is close when the persecution of the natural family, when the war against children, when the assault on human nature shall end.

The enemies of the natural family grow worried. A triumph that, not so many years ago, they thought complete is no longer sure. Their fury grows. So do their attempts, ever more desperate, at coercion. Yet their mistakes also mount in number. They misread human nature. They misread the times.

We all are called to be the actors, the moral soldiers, in this drive to realize the life ordained for us by our Creator. Our foes are dying, of their own choice; we have a world to gain. Natural families of all races, nations, and creeds, let us unite. <sup>®</sup>FIA

## END NOTES

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“To the world, we say:

- We will build a new culture of marriage, where others would define marriage out of existence.
- We will welcome and celebrate more babies and larger families, where others would continue a war on human fertility.
- We will find ways to bring mothers, fathers, and children back home, where others would further divide parents from their children.
- And we will create true home economies, where others would subject families to the full control of big government and vast corporations.”

From *The Natural Family: A Manifesto*