

The May 21st Document (A Manifesto)

I. Introduction

Everyone has a worldview. The following manifesto is an expression of a worldview. It is the worldview of at least one person, but is not necessarily for this person only.

Most, if not all, of the ideas that are expressed in this manifesto have been expressed by others. This manifesto is like a point in a river: much flows into it and much flows out of it. Others may draw from it what they will. As it is said in the Bible: "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

II. Manifesto Proper

A. Preamble

What is the measure of a man, that is, an adult male human being? Why is he on earth? Many have tried to direct him in the ways he should go. But beyond those mortal agents that would claim authority over a man, there are universal truths and principles that beckon him. A man should give the firstfruits of his earthly allegiance to these before other mortals. He should be prepared to turn his back against the crowd and "go his own way." In this, he should even strive beyond his own potential narcissism and live for something more sublime than the temporal realities of human existence.

B. Would-Be Masters

Given what is affirmed in the Preamble, a man must cast a cold eye of discernment upon his Would-Be Masters:

i. Religion

If a man is religious, let him examine the validity of what he believes. A superior religion is based upon reason, not demagoguery. So, a man should judge the claims of any religious leader that presumes to speak on behalf of God. Religious leaders are human beings, and human beings commit errors of judgment and conduct. A religious leader may think that God is speaking to him, but it may be his own delusion that speaks. All religions must be measured against the standard of truth. Because a man was raised to believe in something, it does not mean he believes according to the truth. Finally, let it be noted that a religion which depends more on force than the pursuit of truth for its survival is a suspect religion.

ii. Culture

A man owes nothing to his culture as much he owes something to humanity. Cultures and their customs come and go like the fashions they generate. Universal principles are not dependent upon them. A man may forsake his culture for a higher purpose. Therefore, let all the claims of a man's culture be measured against the standard of truth. Let a man not be a slave of fashion or of culture, but the master of himself.

iii. Government

Government (i.e., the state) is nothing more than coercion. Like every other

weapon, it was conceived by human beings and points to the ruthlessness of human nature. Coercion cannot build but only destroy. By way of analogy, consider this: a man's generosity is seen in his willingness to give, not because a gun is held to his head. No one should celebrate the need for a handgun, even when it is used for a legitimate end. The same holds true with government. No one should look to a government to make its own people virtuous or to spread virtue elsewhere. Virtue comes from the inside of the human heart. Virtue dictates that actual force should only be used to repel actual force, a force that imminently threatens the innocent. A society that depends upon government to be virtuous or prosperous is like a brain-dead body animated by life support systems. It is a travesty of the living. That is all it is.

iv. **Wealth**

Wealth does not determine the character or worth of a man. There are scoundrels whose wealth is stolen from those less powerful. There are others who receive their wealth through inheritance or some other happenstance.

Hard work may be essential in obtaining wealth, but it is not the sole explanation for its acquisition. Fortune plays a role, as well. Indeed, those who cry the loudest about the merits of their exertions often forget the generosity they have received from others. The *laissez-faire* capitalist may cry about "free markets," "competition," and "self-reliance" while forgetting that his seat cushion was fluffed by the state. Many a self-centered plutocrat calls himself a "libertarian," not realizing that if the state withers, so may he.

Wealth cannot save society from all its ills. Only civic virtues can truly do that. The wealthiest nations on earth have their share of social pathologies. Wealth in its social sense is, at best, the beginning of a good deed; it is also the beginning of a crime. The character of a people will determine which way it will be. Let it also be noted that many good deeds can be done without wealth, but crimes are almost always dependent upon its existence.

Wealth can make life easier for a man, but it cannot guarantee happiness or freedom from hardship. The world has its share of affluent people who are unhappy. Sometimes, they are unhappy in spite of their money; sometimes, they are unhappy because of their money. The man who has learned the difficult art of contentment is a thousand times richer than the man who has money but is not content. Therefore, excess wealth is best spent for the betterment of one's world, not in the pursuit of fleeting pleasures.

v. **Romance/Sex**

A man's intrinsic worth is not defined by romantic and/or sexual relations with others, namely women. His happiness does not depend upon such relations, either. A man's happiness depends upon his integrity, his wisdom, and his initiative. A man who thinks he cannot live a full life without being loved by a woman is not someone to be celebrated, but someone to be pitied. Such a man is powerless, being driven along by external circumstances and those who would exploit him. Better for a man to be alone than than to betray his principles for the uncertain promise of intimacy.

vi. **Family**

A man's intrinsic worth is not dependent on his ability to sire children. The world is full of children as it is. There is no need to have any more. Whether we reproduce or not, we all return to the dust. Therefore, let a man choose fatherhood free of any coercion or sense of duty to social custom. Let it be out of love for the child to be created and only that. Moreover, let a man who contemplates having children consider how much evil, pain, and sadness is in the world. The world can change his children just as his children can change the world.

c. **Liberty**

i. **With Liberty Comes Responsibility**

There are universal liberties to which all men are entitled. A man must not only acknowledge these liberties for himself, but for others as well. A man who does otherwise declares his own liberties not to be universal, but merely the result of power. In such a case, a man's liberties are tenuous at best and illegitimate at worst. In disregarding the freedom of others, a man disregards his own.

ii. **Authoritarianism Must Be Rejected**

Just as man should be not enslaved by his Would-Be Masters, so should he not participate in enslaving others. He should, for example, never be found in the role of a religious demagogue that lords his authority over his followers; a government bureaucrat that micromanages the personal lives of average citizens or wages war for dubious political causes; a business executive that places his monetary and career ambitions above the welfare and livelihood of his employees; or an overbearing husband or father. Since liberty comes with responsibility, authoritarianism cannot exist in a free and just society.

d. **Necessary Virtues**

i. **Self-Improvement**

A man should endeavor to improve himself physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Physical improvement lends itself to more energy, more years of living, less discomfort, and less disease. Mental improvement means liberty from the bonds of ignorance, poverty, and authoritarianism. Emotional improvement means control of one's passions. It means freedom from delusion, thus being conducive to effective mental improvement. Finally, if a man believes in God, then spiritual improvement ensures that the man acts as his Creator intended.

ii. **Self-Control**

A man must learn self-control. This includes the ability to delay or forego some immediate gratification for a higher purpose. A man who does not learn self-control is himself controlled. He cannot accomplish anything worthwhile, being a slave to external stimuli and a candidate for despair.

iii. **Industry**

It's a blessing when a man finds a legitimate avenue for putting his talents to

work. Besides possibly putting food on his table, it gives him a sense of purpose and direction. It takes his mind off his own problems. The idle man, on the other hand, is often miserable and feels worthless. Therefore, it behooves a man to do something productive. Even if what he does is no great thing and is without monetary reward, it is better than nothing.

iv. **Generosity**

A man who is not generous with others forgets his own humanity. Inanimate objects may be self-sufficient, but not human beings. A selfish man calls into question the legitimacy of his material blessings, for they were most likely obtained through the generosity, cooperation, and forbearance of others.

v. **Rejection of Malice**

Anger and disgust at other people's behaviors and ideas should not be equated with hate. If one believes otherwise, then one can never discipline or correct those that do harm to themselves or to others. Having said that, hate itself is never justified. This is because hatred leads to dehumanization of the person or people hated. Dehumanization leads to oppression. Oppression, in turn, undermines the claims of liberty and morality that the oppressor would make for himself.

iii. **First Theological Addendum**

While it is not necessary for one to be religious in order to derive some personal benefit from the Manifesto, it should be noted that the Manifesto is informed by a Biblical worldview. What follows are references to Scriptures which support the Manifesto. They are presented according to each section of the Manifesto Proper.

A. **Preamble**

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Mark 12:30; Matthew 6:24; Acts 5:29; Galatians 1:10

B. **Would-Be Masters**

i. **Religion**

1 John 4:1; Matthew 7:15-23; Matthew 23:8-12; John 8:32; John 18:36; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; 1 Peter 5:1-3

ii. **Culture**

Galatians 1:10; 1 John 2:17; Romans 12:2

iii. **Government**

1 Samuel 8:1-22

iv. **Wealth**

Luke 12:15; Luke 6:24; James 2:6; Ecclesiastes 9:11; Matthew 5:45; 1 Timothy 6:6-10; Ecclesiastes 5:10-12; Psalm 49; 1 Timothy 6:17-19

v. **Romance/Sex**

1 Corinthians 7:8; 1 Corinthians 7:38; Proverbs 31:3

vi. **Family**

Luke 12:15; Ecclesiastes 4:1-3

c. **Liberty**

i. **With Liberty Comes Responsibility**

Galatians 5:13; Matthew 7:12

ii. **Authoritarianism Must Be Rejected**

Luke 22:24-27; Matthew 23:12; Philippians 2:1-11; 1 Peter 5:1-5; 1 Peter 3:7; Colossians 3:21

d. **Necessary Virtues**

i. **Self-Improvement**

1 Timothy 4:8; 2 Peter 1:5-9

ii. **Self-Control**

1 Corinthians 6:12; 1 Peter 5:8

iii. **Industry**

Ecclesiastes 3:22; Colossians 3:23; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-13

iv. **Generosity**

Galatians 6:10; Proverbs 22:9

v. **Rejection of Malice**

Jude 22-23; Ephesians 4:26; Ephesians 4:31; 1 John 3:15

IV. **Second Theological Addendum (Heilsgeschichte)**

Heilsgeschichte is a theological term referring to the history of a people's salvation. There is a salvation history for humanity in general. It begins in the Garden of Eden and ends with the Second Coming of Christ. In this section of the Manifesto, the salvation history of humanity is outlined, which puts all the other sections of the Manifesto into a religious perspective.

A. **From Eden to Moses**

Humanity was created in the image of God. Humanity, however, rebelled against God and therefore was spiritually separated from the source of life and true

happiness, God himself. The expectations that God had for humanity specifically in the Garden of Eden no longer apply because sin has entered into the world (Romans 5:12). The blessings of Eden are removed. Moreover, though God told Noah to "be fruitful and multiply," the Apostle Paul reveals in Acts 17:24-31 that the purpose of mankind's propagation was fulfilled by the Cross.

B. From Abraham to the Cross

God made a covenant with the descents of Abraham, namely the Israelites. This was not an eternal covenant (Hebrews 8:1-13). God promised that through Abraham, the "nations" would be blessed; this promise was fulfilled in Christ (Galatians 3:6-29). There is no need for a state of Israel and no need for going back to the Old Testament. While the Old Testament is useful for learning and instruction (Romans 15:4), no Christian is bound by its commandments or should dare to think that it serves as some blueprint for how modern society should be arranged (Galatians 5:4; Galatians 3:26-29).

C. After the Cross

We are living in the last days. In other words, there will be no more covenants or epochs in the story of humanity's redemption. The things of this world are passing away (1 John 2:17). Creation cannot be redeemed by human effort; instead, it remains in anguish (Romans 8:22). In the cold eye of eternity, there is no hope left for this world. It will be destroyed and replaced with something else at the Second Coming of Christ (2 Peter 3:1-13).

One may thus ask what is the point to caring about the world around him. It is simple. Love for our fellow human beings compels us to be involved in making the world a better place (Galatians 5:14; Galatians 6:10). By way of analogy, even though a patient is terminally ill, we do not ignore the patient's suffering. The same principle holds true with the world. Even though it will pass away, we should alleviate its misery and ugliness whenever possible.

Though human beings have been separated from God since the Fall, God beckons them to be in fellowship with Him again. A way to this reconciliation has been made possible through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:3-14). Whoever believes in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, is baptized for the remission of sins, and remains faithful unto death shall be saved (John 3:16; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-42; 1 Peter 3:21; Acts 8:35-39; Acts 22:16; Revelation 2:10).