

ChalcedonReport

MINISTRY NEWS FROM THE CHALCEDON FOUNDATION® DECEMBER 2023

Moving Men to Faith and Action: The Simple Mission of Chalcedon

Chalcedon Editorial

One could mark the beginning of Christian Reconstruction with the starting of the Chalcedon Foundation in 1965, but as you know, the idea of the victorious Kingdom of God in history is hardly a new concept. Still, Christian Reconstruction is identified primarily with the works of R. J. Rushdoony, and to date, much of what others wrote over the ensuing years are extrapolations of his work on the law of God and the application of the faith.

Rushdoony would have it no other way. He saw his work as “scratching the surface,” which meant he anticipated others would carry the torch:

For me theology means the total mandate of God through His word. What I have written only scratches the surface; it is an introduction to the subject, and it is written to move men to faith and action.¹

As a scholar, his mission was simple: “to move men to faith and action,” and as we know, scholarship and academia can be anything but simple. The end result of that complexity is a great divide between the academy and the pew while we who might be “well read” end up decrying the lack of strong doctrine amongst evangelicals. Rushdoony understood this, so many of his books were first delivered orally to small groups of layman who then asked questions which Rushdoony used to revise the chapters he would later write. The believer’s application of the faith was always in his mind.



Outside of academia, denominations, and large conferences, Rushdoony labored primarily in small settings, but his impact was significant because the ideas he penned were powerful.

Christian Renaissance

One might find it surprising that the idea of the victory of God in history would be something Christians would oppose. We can certainly understand the resistance of the unbeliever to the rule of Christ in history, but the believer? Much like the person living with a house full of cats, we can acclimate ourselves to the stench of defeat.

In the middle of the turbulent 1960s, right after a significant conservative presidential defeat, Rushdoony launched the Chalcedon Foundation espousing right out of the gate a vision far grander than a single

scholar could represent. At the outset, as he wrote in his first letter to his supporters, he saw his initial target as “humanism and its statism,” and that the answer is Christian faith and liberty:

What you are doing, in support of me, is to sponsor a counter-measure to the prevailing trend, to promote by your support, interest, *and* study, a Christian Renaissance, to declare by these measures your belief that the answer to humanism and its statism is Christian faith and liberty.²

Notice he said, “support, interest, *and* study.” Once again, his concern was to equip the laity, and that could only be

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achieved through Christian education, i.e., providing laymen with strong Christian books that deliver the massive idea of the victorious Kingdom of God in history.

Religion of Revolution

In many ways, we are living through a similar time as the mid-1960s, and now over half a century later, there is no need to revise Chalcedon's mission, message, or publications. If anything, you might better understand why publishing and re-publishing play such an important role in the work we do today.

As an example, we're currently working on compiling and editing an unpublished manuscript by Rushdoony on *The Religion of Revolution* which speaks directly to the subversive forces we see today operating in universities, government, media, and churches. As we know, there is nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9), so a manuscript written so many years ago will sound as if it was written recently—a frequent comment about Rushdoony's books.

These manuscripts are labor intensive beginning with the fact that many were discovered after Rushdoony passed in 2001, and we have to ensure that we have all the chapters necessary for a complete work. Then, pages of hand written text must be typed up and initially proofed before being organized into an outline of a book.

From there, a technical reading needs to be done, and that task is usually given to our resident scholar and vice-president Martin Selbrede. He is the foremost expert in Rushdoony's writings as well as a brilliant editor and proofer who will chase down footnotes with a passion. Martin has played a central role in helping us publish the most excellent versions of our catalog, and the majority of the time he's invested has been voluntary and without sufficient compensation.

As a side note, we are still encouraging supporters to be as generous as they can with their giving so that we might have Martin's full time devoted to the scholarship Chalcedon desperately needs. We believe Rushdoony's books

4 Evil as a Necessity

The occultist, Manly P. Hall, in commenting on the Gnostic Godhead, declared that

Among the later Gnostics the Godhead is represented thus:

1. Anthropos (The Man);
2. Anthropos, Son of Anthropos (Man, Son of Man);
3. Ilda Baath (The Son of Chaos)

Manly Palmer Hall: *Questions and Answers, Fundamentals of the Occult Sciences*, 1917, 1946, p. 139. Los Angeles: Philosophical Research Society, 1947, 1946, second edition.

In this "Godhead," there is no place for God, only for man and for chaos. It is significant that the Gnostic Godhead was inclusive of chaos. The purpose of Gnosis, according to The Pimandres of Hermes Trismegistus, is "to become God." (Hans Jonas: The Gnostic Religion, p. 153. Boston: Beacon Press, 1958, 1963, second edition.) Gnostic speculations included two types of dualism, both Iranian and Syrian. (Ibid., p. 236ff.) Manichaeism was a form of gnosticism.

The Bogomil heresy in Europe was a form of Manichaean gnosticism. Cardinal Torquemada, uncle of the inquisitor, in 1462 listed as the first of "fifty errors of Manichaeism in Bosnia" the fact that "the Bogomils taught that there were two gods, a god of light standing for supreme good, a god of darkness standing for supreme evil." (Oto Bihalji-Merin, "The Stone Carvings of the Bogomils," in Oto Bihalji-Merin, Alojz Benac, Toso Dabac: Bogomil Sculpture, p. xi. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, n.d.) Bihalji-Merin speaks of it as "the

One of the hand-written chapters from *The Religion of Revolution* entitled "Evil as a Necessity."

are of utmost importance, but we believe Chalcedon should be engaging current topics so that this ministry can speak more directly to our times.

The "Hard Sell"

As mentioned above, the central work of the Kingdom of God will come down to individual Christians investing in personal study so that they can apply their faith and encourage others to do the same.

Until now, Christian Reconstruction has been a hard sell to the wider church because Christians struggle with the idea of victory for the church in history prior to the return of Christ as well as the responsibility that such a vision requires. Therefore, the better we can equip laymen to contend for the faith, the greater influence they will have on the culture around them. What's important to note is that the culture is changing so

rapidly that the ideas within Christian Reconstruction don't sound as radical as they once did. The antinomianism in the church has led to moral compromise, and this helps to present a case for theonomy. The cultural decline without revival, rapture, or political victory forces Christians to consider the creation of a Christian social order.

In other words, as the flood waters of evil creep ever closer to the doors of the average evangelical, the more they'll realize they don't have the worldview necessary to contend with the storm.

The Tithe is the Key

The decline of culture is more serious than an opportunity to reach more people, and this is where educated believers must be prepared to act. Rushdoony wrote often about the need to utilize the Christian tithe in order to finance Christian Reconstruction, and

by that he meant alternative forms of government, education, and charity.

Obviously, we see this clearly in the Christian school and homeschool movements. Whereas our detractors accuse us of seeking to take control of the powers of civil government, Christian education represents “taking back” government by way of self-government. We did not take over public education. We obeyed God by teaching our own children regardless of the extra expense and effort that was necessary. This is why Christian responsibility has always been a hard sell, but society is now at a stage in which families are removing their children from public schools in record numbers.

People are learning that the only way to best ensure the health and safety of their families is by personal responsibility, and that means a restoration of Christian faith and liberty.

Small but Powerful

Within all communities there should be an expansion of this tactic as we look for new ways to take back government, health, justice, charity, and more. This is why God gave us the power of the tithe. It is a means to financing the work of Christian Reconstruction, and it is the primary way we work outside the current system in order to better serve the Christian community.

We can all do as Rushdoony did and work with small groups and individuals, but that means becoming as equipped as we can be, and that's where the Chalcedon Foundation comes in.

Chalcedon is still a small ministry with big ideas but our mission is a simple one: we want to move believers to greater faith and action, and we need your continual support to do that. Please continue in your prayerful and financial support of this ministry. Its importance cannot be emphasized enough. 🏠

1. R. J. Rushdoony: *Systematic Theology in Two Volumes* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1994), p. xv.

2. R. J. Rushdoony: *Faith & Action: The Collected Articles of R. J. Rushdoony from the Chalcedon Report, 1965-2004* (Vallecito, CA: Chalcedon/Ross House Books, 2018), p. 1202.

The Depths of Satan

R. J. Rushdoony (*A Word In Season*, Volume 1, pp. 66-68)

In the letters to the seven churches in Revelation, our Lord sharply condemned those in Thyatira who felt that to be a Christian, it was necessary to know “the depths of Satan” (Rev. 2:24), or the deep things of Satan. It is very important for us to know what He meant by this.

Many church members felt that it was their duty to study and document endlessly all the activities of Satan and of evil men. They became experts on evil, on conspiracies, on corruption, and on every movement against God and His Son. Christ had ordered His followers to “teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:19–20). The task of the believer is to teach and to rebuild as God in Christ converts him and others through him.

Tragically, too many church members, like those condemned by our Lord at Thyatira, neglect their calling in order to study and document evil. In the early church, such people soon withdrew from church into the Gnostic movement, a pretended Christian, but actually radically humanistic, movement. These Gnostics held that, in order to protect themselves against Satan and his hosts, it was important to know the names of the demons. As a result, they memorized the names, or supposed names, of many demons as a means of protection. They also investigated various kinds of sins to arm themselves with knowledge against them. According to Dr. Robert M. Grant, in a study on Gnosticism, some Gnostics argued “that ‘perfect knowledge’ was simply to do ‘everything’ without fear.” Thus they became practitioners of the evil they were supposedly against.

I submit that we have a similar problem today. Many misguided people spend time and money studying evil, documenting conspiracies, endlessly probing “the depths of Satan.” They cease to become useful members of society: they are simply experts on evil. They often believe more in the power of evil than in the power of God.

In Thyatira, our Lord tells us that such people ended up as followers of “that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess” and who was seducing the people from Christ and the law (Rev. 2:20). Christ's promise to all such people was and is judgment and death (Rev. 2:22–23).

Now, what about you? Are you majoring in evil, or are you doing the Lord's work? Are you a force for righteousness, or merely a person with a nose for dirt and evil? Will yours be a life misspent in studying evil, or a life spent in knowing and applying God's Word, so that when you die, men and women will arise to call you blessed, and Christ will say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Matt. 25:21). 🏠

Why Christian Reconstruction is the Answer to Suicidal Humanism

By Mark R. Rushdoony

John F. Kennedy once suggested that our problems today are technical, not moral. In other words, we're on the right track. We're on the ascendancy, and all that's needed to solve our social ills are advances in medicine, computer sciences, and other technologies. Modern man thinks that he's on the right road to controlling everything scientifically, and yet, morally, our situation only gets worse.

Saying our problems are technical avoids what they truly are: that man is a rebel against God, and he's a sinner. He rebels against his creator and his creator's law, and my father used the term humanism quite frequently to describe this. If you think of an authority structure, humanism is when you remove God and the supernatural realm entirely from your thinking, and it assumes that the highest form of being is man. This essentially leaves man in charge giving him a de facto authority and position that he does not have in a Biblical worldview.

Pushing God Out of the Picture

When you embrace the idea that human history can be explained entirely through evolution, you end up pushing God out of the picture, labeling Him as nothing more than a made-up character from ancient stories, i.e., a myth. People created these myths because they fulfilled a certain need for understanding and meaning.

Darwin's theories have further entrenched this viewpoint, suggesting that the universe and everything in it, including us, have always existed in some physical form or another. Everything we observe and experience is considered to be a result of the natural and ongoing processes of a universe that has always been here, making God and religious beliefs appear as human inventions rather than the foundation of truth itself.

“What was built by centuries of Christendom is now deteriorating, and that's why my father put forward the single idea that the response to this suicidal humanism is Christian Reconstruction.”

People who adhere to this perspective claim that time, space, and matter have always existed; these are eternal properties unique to our universe. This leads them to question the nature of religion and the existence of God, suggesting that these are mere human creations. In their eyes, religion is simply a fabricated system of beliefs.

With this mindset, they feel completely justified in believing that religion is not ultimately necessary and can be phased out over time. They distance themselves from any religious or supernatural explanations of the world, choosing not to incorporate them into their understanding of human existence and the issues we face.

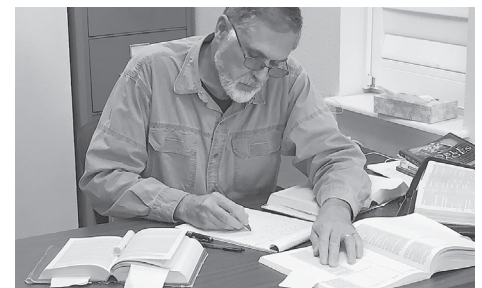
As a result, modern man adopts a mechanical view of the universe, confident that he has grasped its true nature, especially since the advent of Darwinian theory. Man believes that all answers to our problems can be found within the universe itself, dismissing the need for any divine or supernatural intervention.

Restablishing the Foundation

We are watching our culture fall apart, and people bemoan that we no longer live in the moral universe we once did, or the social universe we experienced just a generation or two ago. What was built by centuries of Christendom is now deteriorating, and that's why my

father put forward the single idea that the response to this suicidal humanism is Christian Reconstruction.

That means doing what God says as we start with ourselves and our families, and then we work outward to our vocations and our various spheres of influence, but we have to start obeying God to reestablish the foundation upon something that's real. What is real is that God says “thou shalt not,” or things will go badly for you, and we're proving day by day, year by year, that when we disobey God, and we defy His law, things go badly. 🙏



Support Chalcedon!

Our objective is to help equip Christians to apply their faith and “take back” government by means of Biblical self-government, and we need your financial support to help continue this mission. Please take a few moments today to prayerfully consider supporting Chalcedon with your tax-deductible giving. For 58 years, it's been supporters like you that have made the difference. Your tithes and offerings are what keep this vital mission going. We've enclosed a self-addressed, postage-paid envelope to make it easy, and you can also donate online at:

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