

# ChalcedonReport

MINISTRY NEWS FROM THE CHALCEDON FOUNDATION®

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## What Is Christian Reconstruction?

Mark R. Rushdoony

I am frequently asked, “What is Christian Reconstruction?” Many people assume that Christian Reconstruction is some sort of an agenda or program, but it’s really a worldview. Christian Reconstruction, as a term, is merely an analogy—it relates the message and responsibility of the Christian as he approaches his culture.

Our culture has problems because it’s based on man’s sinful nature, and we know that rebellion against God in any area of life and thought never works. When men rebel against God, they’re going to have problems. They’re going to fail. And what we’re witnessing around us is a progressing systemic failure in our culture. For the Christian, the alternative to allowing culture to fail is to reconstruct it. It’s to rebuild failing ideas, practices, and institutions on a more solid foundation. It’s to rebuild them on the Word of God.

### Where It Begins

Christian Reconstruction begins with ourselves. It begins with rebuilding our thinking and our approach to our responsibility to God, then progressing outwardly to our families and our various spheres of influence, to institutions, and to our communities. At heart, Christian Reconstruction is faithfulness to God. All of Scripture is really about reconstruction because Scripture is about an applied worldview.

After all, Scripture begins with creation, and it ends with a picture of the eternal kingdom, so Scripture gives us a history of God calling man back to Himself and His perspective—on how



With my father in 1998 at a conference in Tampa Bay, Florida.

man is living in the context in which God has placed him. If we look at the beginning of Scripture, in Genesis, the first chapter ends with God’s decree to man to have dominion over the creation under him, and this decree never changed throughout Biblical history.

### God’s Law Because of God’s Authority

As Christian Reconstructionists, we talk about *theonomy*, and without getting into the details of theonomy immediately, the literal meaning is the *law of God*. Why do we talk about the law of God? It’s because we believe in the creator God, and if you believe that God is the creator, His Word must prevail; it must be authoritative. If He is truly the Creator, then He is authoritative in every area of life.

This perspective places man under God, and man exercises dominion under God, but how does man exercise dominion? He doesn’t do it on his own,

in terms of his own thinking or his own opinions, because that’s repeating the sin of Genesis 3:5, to be as gods, knowing good and evil for yourself. Man’s first sin was the desire to do what he wanted to do, to act as God.

When Jesus gave the Great Commission in Matthew 28, He declared that He possessed all power in heaven and earth, and that’s the reason why we’re to go out and preach and teach all things as subject to Him. This is further confirmation that the dominion decree remained in force from Genesis to the time of Christ and continues today in the Great Commission.

### The Sovereignty of God

This highlights the importance of our redemption, because redemption involves our becoming a new creature in Christ where the old man is put aside, and we become new creatures (cf., Eph. 5:22; 2 Cor. 5:17), but we only do that through submitting ourselves. We can’t

perfectly undo the curse in our lives, but we have to accept our new role as new creatures in Christ. The only way we can self consciously do that is by obeying what God says.

Therefore, Christian Reconstruction is a self-conscious application of a Biblical worldview to our day to day responsibilities as well as our message to the culture around us. It's in this context of all power and authority belonging to the incarnate Christ that we preach and teach. We teach a worldview that says that we are not God; we don't determine right and wrong. If we are truly subject to God, this is what we believe and this is how we act.

Humanism, on the other hand, eliminates God from the equation, and whenever you eliminate God from the creation, man becomes the highest being. Therefore, the contrast is always between *theonomy*, God's Word and God's law as authoritative, or man's word, man's law being authoritative in *humanism*. Christian Reconstruction begins with a view of God as sovereign and man as fallen, and the sovereignty of God is central to Christian life and thought.

### Dualistic Pietism

There are other perspectives on the Christian faith which have worked contrary to this perspective of the sovereignty of God, and one of them is a *dualistic pietism*. Dualism is a very ancient idea that defines all of reality in a very different way than Christianity. Dualism describes the world in metaphysical terms saying there's a physical aspect to reality, and there's a spiritual aspect to reality, and this is the ultimate distinction. It therefore tends to see the world—what is physical—as evil, or bad, and that which is spiritual—or that which is in the realm of the idea—as the better, higher way. This is a metaphysical view of reality.

However, Scripture does not say that matter is bad. In fact, it specifically says that matter was created by God and declared very good (Gen. 1:31). Man's problem, according to Scripture, is not metaphysical—it's not matter versus spirit—it's a moral problem. It's not the

## **“The only way to escape the judgment of God and the collapse of our culture is to rebuild on a firmer foundation, and this is the essence of Christian Reconstruction.”**

fact that he's earthly. It's not the fact that he is mortal. It's not the fact that he's a physical being. Man's problem is that he's a rebel against God which means his problem is a moral one—one of sin. To counteract sin in man, God has given us His law, which provides us His guidance for how we should act in the world.

The world is not evil. The world itself was created good, and you overcome the sin in the world by obedience to God. Therefore, if you disabuse yourself of this dualistic view of reality, you'll awaken to the responsibility you have to God in the world in your day to day activities.

In addition, man is a physical creature both now and in eternity. We are told that in the resurrection, man will be physically resurrected from the dead. He will then be given a new physical body. In all of eternity, we will be physical beings, although glorified. Being physical, therefore, is not our problem. Sin is our problem. The answer, therefore, to sin is a self conscious obedience to what God commands.

### Coining the Term

Adam rebelled and disobeyed God, and as we become new creatures in Christ, our responsibility is to self-consciously obey Him. My father, R. J. Rushdoony, coined the term *Christian Reconstruction* in 1965, shortly after he started the Chalcedon Foundation. In his first letter to his small band of supporters, he compared their sacrificial support of him to those who sponsored artists during the Renaissance. In that letter, he used the term *Christian Renaissance*, but in his second letter, he coined the term *Christian Reconstruction*.

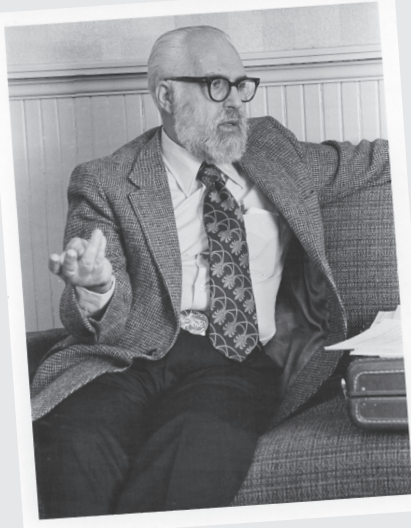
He said we needed to start over and

build on a firm foundation because we were at the end of an era. Humanism is failing, as sin always does, and the answer, he said, is not escapism, but a return to faithfulness because God always rewards faithfulness. Therefore, the only way to escape the judgment of God and the collapse of our culture is to rebuild on a firmer foundation, and this is the essence of Christian Reconstruction.

Christian Reconstruction provides us a worldview, and it gives us our responsibility in terms of that worldview. Academic knowledge only takes us so far, and academic understanding of a worldview doesn't necessarily produce answers. Christian Reconstruction challenges us to look at the big picture of our lifetime and all of human history in order to better understand our responsibilities.

So, how do we know what our life as new creatures in Christ should look like? How do we transform families and vocations? How do we transform our churches? How do we transform our culture? What is our witness to all of these areas as to what God expects of them? The answer is to be the spiritual people we're called and enabled to be, but being spiritual isn't being other worldly. Being spiritual is doing what God expects of us as we're empowered by the Holy Spirit to obey His law-word (cf., Ezekiel 11:19-20, 36:26-27).

Finally, something we should remember is that although Christian Reconstruction sounds like a grandiose agenda, it's not a program that we have to plan and implement like some political movement. Christian Reconstruction is really about how we're to think and how we're to act. God doesn't demand results from us. God only demands faithfulness. It's more about responsibility than it is an outcome. In other words, we can plant and water, but it is always God who gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:6). Our responsibility is to keep working the ground, and Christian Reconstruction tells us how we are to be faithful in serving God in every area of life and faith. 🙏



***“How would the average Christian on the street, so to speak, contribute to Reconstructionism? First of all, he has to believe that the law of God applies to him. Second, he has to start applying it in his home. Tithing is one obvious way. Because when you tithe, and you administer your tithe, and you give it to the church and to various agencies, you are helping to reconstruct society.” ~ R. J. Rushdoony***

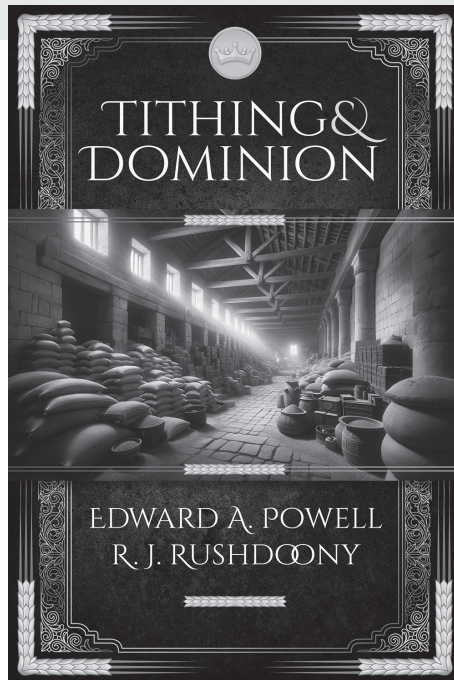
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**Host Study Groups:** Organize small groups in your community to discuss the principles of Christian Reconstruction. These gatherings can serve as a powerful tool for education and outreach, creating a local support network for our cause.

**Donate Financially:** Your financial support is vital for us to continue our work. Regular donations help us to plan and execute projects more effectively, including publishing new materials and maintaining our online presence. Consider setting up a recurring donation to provide steady support.

**Pray for Our Work and Mission:** Prayer is the foundation of everything we do. Please pray for Chalcedon, its leadership, and its mission to educate and apply the message of Christian Reconstruction. Your spiritual support is invaluable.

By taking these steps, you can make a significant difference in helping us achieve our goals and spread this message. Together, we can work towards a society that reflects the faith for all of life.

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# The Culture Changes, Not the Mission

Chalcedon Editorial

**W**e live in a time of manufactured crises where institutions utilize the current fears and angst to turn sparks into flames and flames into infernos. We all know that “bad news sells,” and it’s clear that politicians and their media counterparts push these negative narratives to an emotional population that’s easily triggered. It’s like a satanic “renewing of the mind,” because the objective of the kingdom of darkness is for humanity to “keep on” the old man (Eph. 4:22).

Christians, on the other hand, are supposed to be the proclaimers and publishers of good news, but our good news is not such an easy sell, although that may be changing as the difference between light and darkness is becoming more clear to more people, and no doubt these lines of demarcation will only grow more distinct as this year pushes on.

## Media is Changing

As is often the case, politics is at the center of the problem, but the state is steadily losing its grip on the psyche of the nation as it becomes more clear that the sole purpose of the state is its own power and survival. The will of the people matters little as we see that politicians will not leave the outcomes to the people’s choices, but the ability of the state to effectively utilize propaganda is diminishing as mainstream media’s viewership is shrinking under the shadow of digital media.

Consider the fact that most of the campaigning by GOP candidates until now was done more on podcasts than debates or interviews on cable news networks. This represents a significant shift in the way information is shared and consumed. In addition, every conceivable view of individuals, groups, or organizations is now freely distributed via social media channels, and since Elon Musk purchased Twitter (now X), the floodgates have opened, and smart

phones are replacing news cameras as information “on the streets” is now shared in real time.

## The False Gods are Failing

The society built over the last century is showing its cracks, and what’s now being revealed is more than political corruption. In reality, a false god is dying, and society is now confronted with questions about how to structure life outside of the state—especially if the country further declines economically, socially, or worse. Forseeing our time, Rushdoony wrote:

The state as god is a failure; it is a sovereign whose idiocies are daily ridiculed even in the most oppressive dictatorship. Men have a particularly strong contempt for false gods. They do not last. The false gods are dying all around us. The sovereignty of the state is a dead end for man and the state. It gives us both law and life without meaning.<sup>1</sup>

It’s a rude awakening for most people to realize that the abundance of bureaucratic laws served no greater purpose than to justify the existence of the administrative state. The welfare state, and the warfare state, were never about the citizens. Statism serves the state and conceals its will to be as god with the fig leaves of welfare and national defense.

Once again, man is faced with the question, “How then shall we live?” Even if a new president can right a few wrongs, how does a nation avoid more subversion by insiders, and how do they protect themselves from economic fallout or moral decline?

As you can see, the times are ripe for a return to the gospel and God’s law-word as the standard for life. It will take time for most to realize the full scope of what they’ve been living under, but this is the place where we want to meet them as a ministry. It’s the place at which you should meet them as a friend, co-worker, or family member.

## Long-Term Commitment

By God’s providence we are all positioned to meet people where they are with the answers they don’t know they’re looking for. We tend to look to institutions or leaders for help, but the answer lies in Christian Reconstruction. We must rebuild along Biblical lines and sacrificially invest in this long-term mission.

This is something we’ve always kept in mind at Chalcedon, since from the outset Rushdoony was clear to his supporters about the long-term investment they were committing to by underwriting his work. Therefore, nothing is more important than ensuring that we have our vast resources available for people looking for solutions.

We labor to provide current scholarship, but ultimately we are expanding on the work done by Rushdoony and others, so what’s vital is that the last several decades of materials are archived and featured in both print and digital formats. Whether one wants to research online, watch a video, listen to a sermon, or read a book on their phone, our content is available to anyone around the world.

Although Chalcedon began in 1965, a great deal of what Rushdoony wrote about is more obvious now than at any other time, which is why publishing, promoting, and distributing the central idea of Christian Reconstruction is so needed right now. We must share this message faithfully to those with ears to hear.

Lastly, it has been faithful supporters like you who have worked tirelessly with us to not only support this ministry, but to also share the message of Christian Reconstruction with those within your sphere of influence. For this, we are thankful, and we pray for your labors as we hope you pray for ours. 🙏

1. R. J. Rushdoony, *Sovereignty* (Vallecito, CA: Chalcedon/Ross House Books, 2007), p. 28.