

ChalcedonReport

MINISTRY NEWS FROM THE CHALCEDON FOUNDATION® APRIL 2026

The Missing Piece in Christian Education

“So, we need to stay focused on what our education is about. It’s about training the future. It’s about training the citizens of the Kingdom of God to take that citizenship seriously.” ~ Mark Rushdoony

Nothing is neutral—especially education—and education, since it is based on fields of study, is what people assume is the most neutral. Hence why Christian families rarely questioned sending their children to public schools. In fact, they defended it vehemently when R. J. Rushdoony began questioning public education even before he launched Chalcedon in 1965. Many Christians still defend public schools today.

Rushdoony helped awaken Christians to the religious nature of state schooling and to the necessity of reclaiming the education of their children. That recovery was crucial. But as Andrea Schwartz noted in a recent Chalcedon podcast, for Rushdoony “this was just a starting point, not the end goal.” The real issue was larger: Christian education was to become an instrument of Christian Reconstruction, a means of training a people capable of bringing “every sphere of life” into subjection to Christ.

Losing the Purpose

Many Christian families now understand that public schools are not morally or spiritually safe, and they want an alternative. They want a Christian curriculum. They want to shelter their children from humanism, sexual perversion, and statist indoctrination. Those concerns are legitimate. But if Christian education is reduced to moral protection or to a baptized version of the standard curriculum, then the larger biblical purpose has been lost.

In the same podcast, Mark Rushdoony explained that his father always worked from a broad eschatological confidence, “this big picture of the inevitable growth of the Kingdom,” and not merely its growth but “the certain victory of the Kingdom.” Because of that, education could never be viewed as an isolated project. It had to be understood in terms of a larger calling: “the long range need which is to make it serve the Kingdom of God.” That is the issue. It is about forming citizens of the Kingdom of God who will take their place in history as servants of Christ in every realm.

Lacking a Large Vision

This is where much Christian thinking has become too small. Andrea observed that when many parents begin homeschooling, their first question is, “What curriculum should I get?” That question is understandable, but it can also reveal the problem. As she put it, many parents think “the curriculum will change the family and the society.” They are focused on what to buy rather than on what must be rethought. The issue is not first the acquisition of materials, but the reeducation of the family itself. Parents must learn alongside their children. They must recover a Christian philosophy of life, history, knowledge, law, vocation, and dominion. Otherwise, even a “Christian” curriculum may simply become a religious coating over an essentially public-school mentality.

Mark made this point vividly by comparing many Christian efforts

to early automobiles that were little more than horse-drawn carriages with engines attached. The concept moved forward, but the form remained captive to the past. In the same way, much Christian education has tried “to borrow something that works from the past and hitch something to that and say, this is a much better alternative.” It may be “a step forward,” he said, “but it’s not a final product.” Too often Christians remove the worst features of public education but retain its structure, its assumptions, its age-grading, its credentialism, and its truncated goals.

Martin Selbrede pressed the point even further. The problem is not only that the conception of education may need to be rebuilt from the ground up, but also that Christians often lack a sufficiently large vision. Some parents, he said, are content if their children receive Christian training in the early grades and then are turned over to humanistic institutions later. But this is precisely backwards. “We need to be even more vigilant as we go farther up,” he warned, because the builders of modern Babel become “far more sophisticated” at the higher levels. The clash of worldviews intensifies in the upper grades, the university, and the graduate school. If Christians do not prepare their children for that battle, they are simply offering them up as prey.

Christian Aristocracy

This is why Christian education cannot be defined negatively. It is not enough to say that we are keeping

children away from the bad things. We cannot be preoccupied with avoidance. The goal is not mere withdrawal from corruption. The goal is the cultivation of leadership under Christ—a Christian aristocracy.

That word *aristocracy* may trouble modern ears, and Mark cautioned that terms like elite, aristocracy, theocracy, and even Christian Reconstruction often require too much explanation. Yet the biblical point remains. As Martin argued, leadership arises from an “aristocratic notion of excellence, in meritocracy.” If Christians abandon excellence, they abandon leadership. If they settle for mediocrity, they will not shape the future. And if they refuse to produce leaders, then leadership will come from somewhere else, namely from the ungodly.

For this reason Christian education must aim higher than literacy, graduation, and college admission. It must produce men and women who understand that they have a calling before God. Mark said that “an essential part of education is instilling a worldview, a moral concept based upon who you are as child of God and what your responsibilities are.” Without that worldview, students become lost in routine, shuffled from subject to subject, grade to grade, without any sense of purpose.

Mark observed that the older one-room schoolhouse model, whatever its limitations, often understood this better than modern institutions. Students advanced by ability, not merely by age. Older students helped teach younger ones. Education was ordered toward maturity, usefulness, and responsibility. By contrast, Mark noted that modern schools often intentionally retard advancement for the sake of socialization and bureaucratic convenience. Christian schools can fall into the same trap if they merely imitate the state’s pattern.

Classical Education

Just as serious is the problem of foundations. Martin’s criticism of classical education in its modern form was especially incisive. The issue is not

whether Christians may ever read Plato or Aristotle, but whether these thinkers become formative authorities rather than objects of critical analysis. As he put it, the danger is that “Platonic and Socratic, and Aristotelian thinking now becomes their foundation more so than the one that’s laid, which is Christ.” Then the entire structure is compromised. “It’s not that we’re bending Aristotle to match Christ,” he said. “We’re bending Christ to match Aristotle.” At that point, Christian education has ceased to be Christian in any meaningful sense.

The same concern applies across the curriculum. Martin observed that many Christians seem to want “the same curriculum as the state has, but remove the foul elements.” Yet every subject in the public-school order is taught as though God were irrelevant. A merely cleaned-up curriculum is still resting on a godless foundation. His phrase was unforgettable: we do not want to “put some ketchup on the snake.” We need an altogether different meal. Rushdoony called the alternative to true biblical reconstruction “baptized humanism,” and the phrase remains painfully accurate.

What Should We Do?

What, then, should parents and educators be doing? *First*, they must recover the long-term vision. Christian education is for the Kingdom. It is for dominion under Christ. It is for the cultivation of leaders in every sphere: church, family, business, law, medicine, science, art, agriculture, scholarship, and civil government. Mark was explicit: “We need to develop leadership in all areas of life and thought.” The church is only one aspect of the Kingdom.

Second, they must learn to recognize and develop gifts without imprisoning children in narrow expectations. Andrea spoke helpfully of observing what God has placed in a child and cultivating it for Kingdom service. One child may show aptitude in music, another in agriculture, another in healing, another in building. Education should not flatten these distinctions in the name of egalitarianism. At the same time, as Mark

warned, parents should not prematurely peg a child into a fixed role. Christian education must be flexible enough to nurture both fundamental literacy and emerging calling.

Third, Christians must reject credentialism as the final standard of authority. Martin pointed out that paper credentials often replace true merit and competence. That mentality discourages initiative and reinforces humanistic control. The Christian answer is not anti-intellectualism, but the recovery of genuine excellence grounded in biblical truth. The world should eventually say of Christian institutions, Christian scholarship, Christian craftsmanship, and Christian leadership that these set the standard.

Finally, Christian families must understand that education is a lifelong task. Martin said that if the treasures of Christ are infinite, then learning does not really end “until your last breath.” This, far from being burdensome, is liberating. It means Christian education is not a conveyor belt to adulthood but the formation of lifelong learners who continue taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

That is the missing piece. Christian education is not merely Christian schooling. It is not merely curricular substitution. It is not merely moral sheltering. It is the deliberate formation of a new humanity in Christ, equipped to rethink every discipline, rebuild every institution, and advance the Kingdom of God in history.

If we miss that, we may produce children who are decent, protected, and even successful by conventional standards, yet still unprepared to serve as leaders under Christ. But if we recover Rushdoony’s vision, we will begin to see education as what it truly is: one of God’s ordained means for raising up a people who will not yield on His vision for His Kingdom. Please support our mission of Christian education. Our greatest season of influence is yet to come! 🙏

You can listen to the entire podcast discussion on our website at <https://tinyurl.com/ChalcedonPodcastEp63>

A Good and Faithful Servant

Remembering the one who helped provide many of the books on your shelves

Mark R. Rushdoony

Rev. Ellsworth E. McIntyre passed away on January 9, 2026. He was the founder of Grace Community Schools in the Naples, Florida, area and pastor of Nicene Covenant Church. He was also a generous patron to Chalcedon. Pick up a copy of an R. J. Rushdoony title and it is likely you will find an acknowledgment to the schools and church. There have been many times when publishing projects would have been held back indefinitely due to publishing costs without the funding that was provided from “Mac” and his church.

When Chalcedon published the anthology of my father’s magazine articles in 2019, we titled it with an expression he often used— “faith and action.” Having seen the emphasis of too many in the church limited to an intellectual understanding of theological concepts, he frequently alluded to the need for action based on faith. He was all for theological precision but saw the result of churchmen seeing theological purity as the end game of Christian duty. It should rather be the starting point for Christian action. My father respected all who did Kingdom work. When he began testifying as an expert witness in religious liberty cases, he did so for many whose theology was a bit removed from his own. All who did Kingdom work, he once said, were to that extent furthering Christian Reconstruction. Ellsworth McIntyre not only did the hard work of establishing Christian Schools, but he also made them successful with a keen eye to operate them in a sustainable, businesslike manner. He was a doer of the Word.

But many are not as directly involved in Christian ministry as Dr. McIntyre. I have often heard people being apologetic because their vocation was not furthering the Kingdom of God. The Protestant Reformation’s

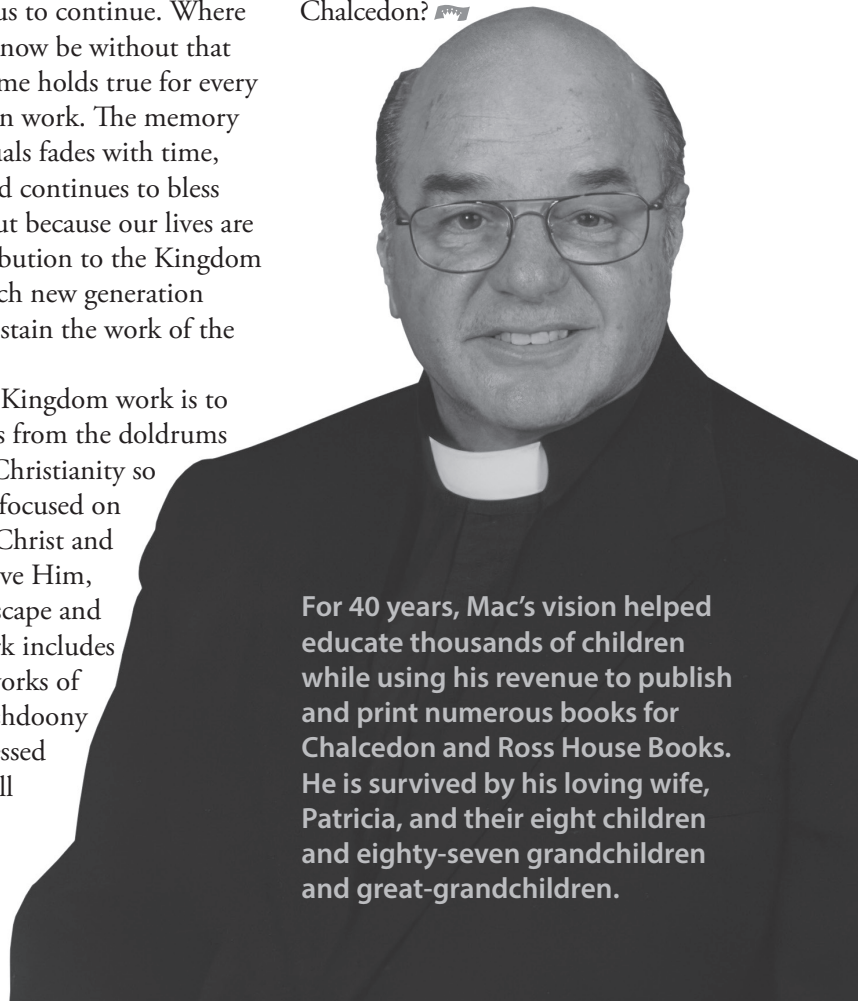
emphasis on the “priesthood of all believers” needs to be revived. Honest work is pleasing to God because your work is done “as to the Lord, and not to men” (Ephesians 6:5-8). But even the mundane labor we do will become productive dominion work when we give back our tithes and offerings. A basic tithe alone, when given by ten faithful believers, represents the equivalent of one full-time Christian worker.

Have you ever read the dedication plaques in an old church and thought of the long-since-passed saints who built what now blesses you and continues to serve the saints? Think of all the great accomplishments of Christians in the past. They had to be capitalized, and tithes and offerings are the funding mechanism of Kingdom work. I often think of those who have sustained our work over the years and how their gifts still enable us to continue. Where would our work now be without that enabling? The same holds true for every church or mission work. The memory of those individuals fades with time, but what they did continues to bless the Kingdom. But because our lives are short, our contribution to the Kingdom is limited and each new generation must, in turn, sustain the work of the Kingdom.

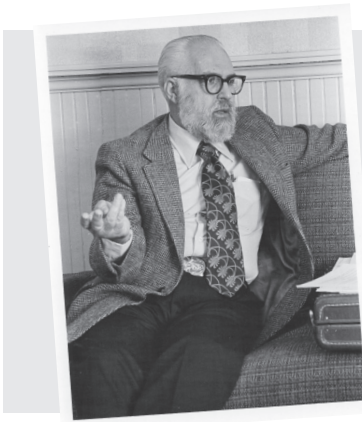
Chalcedon’s Kingdom work is to arouse Christians from the doldrums of self-centered Christianity so that they can be focused on the Lordship of Christ and how they can serve Him, rather than on escape and reward. This work includes promoting the works of Rousas John Rushdoony because he addressed issues that are still with us that the church will have to address head

on. As I have said many times, I believe his greatest impact is yet future. It has been twenty-five years since my father passed into glory. The work of most authors disappears after their death. Chalcedon has more of my father’s works available now than ever before, and in multiple formats using means that did not exist twenty-five years ago. Moreover, I should note that my father’s influence today is even out of proportion to the number of books sold. That is the power of books, one that has been obvious since Gutenberg’s day. Ellsworth McIntyre, along with Grace Community Schools and Nicene Covenant Church, helped facilitate that continued impact of R. J. Rushdoony a quarter century after his passing. It is that for which we are grateful and honor his memory.

Who will carry the torch and continue to enable the ministry of Chalcedon? 🙏



For 40 years, Mac’s vision helped educate thousands of children while using his revenue to publish and print numerous books for Chalcedon and Ross House Books. He is survived by his loving wife, Patricia, and their eight children and eighty-seven grandchildren and great-grandchildren.



“The basic answer to this socialism is that children belong to God, and all men, as God’s creatures, are God’s property. We had better then, place ourselves under God’s law and liberty, and enjoy the prosperity of His blessing and grace, or we shall find ourselves and our children groaning under the slavery of socialism.” ~ R. J. Rushdoony

Who Owns the Child? by R. J. Rushdoony

A Word In Season: Daily Messages on the Faith for All of Life, Volume 1, pp. 78-80

A century ago, John Swett, fourth state superintendent of schools in California (1863–1868) and the real founder of the state’s public school system, made some amazing claims. In his First Biennial Report, for the school years 1864 and 1865, Swett denied that parents had any rights in the public schools. “In private schools ... the parents there, in legal effect, are the employers of the teacher, and consequently his masters; but in the common and public schools they are neither his employers nor his masters.” Moreover, Swett stated, “Parents have no remedy as against the teacher.” The public school is a state institution and basically and essentially controlled by the legal agencies of the state and its counties. Public schools therefore are not extensions of parental authority but are “wards of the State,” and children, on entering these schools, become wards of the school, except, as Swett noted, when the school is a private one. In 1874, during Henry N. Bolander’s term as state superintendent, an attempt was made legally to prevent parents from sending their children to Christian, parochial, or private schools without permission from local state school trustees.

“For a man to claim ownership of his children is not only morally wrong but also especially offensive. How much more wrong it is for the state to claim ownership of both child and man!”

The governing principle of this first attempt by the state to strike at non-statist schools was that the children belong to the state. John Swett spoke of school age children as “the children of the State,” i.e., they belonged to the state, although the parents still had some limited status. However, Swett added in his *Elementary Schools of California*, “children arrived at the age of maturity belong, not to the parents, but to the State, to society, to the country.” This, of course, is the fundamental thesis of socialism and communism: instead of a government of, by, and for the people, belonging to the people under God, the people belong to the state, both as children and as adults.

But man was created, not by the state, but by God, and man belongs, therefore, not to the state but to God. Children are a gift and

an inheritance from God, given by God and to be committed to God by faith and godly nurture and education. No man owns his child, even though the child is committed to him by God. For a man to claim ownership of his children is not only morally wrong but also especially offensive. How much more wrong it is for the state to claim ownership of both child and man!

But this is again, and more than ever, being asserted. It has even reached the point where some educators, with their eyes on many Negro homes in particular, have gone so far as to say, as one state superintendent in a Western state has, that we should consider “removing some children from the influences of their environment [parents] for 24 hour a day schooling.” Is the answer to one evil a greater evil? Only a few slave owners of the Old South separated mothers from their babies; are our modern educators planning to make an occasional ancient evil a new way of life?

The basic answer to this socialism is that children belong to God, and all men, as God’s creatures, are God’s property. We had better then, place ourselves under God’s law and liberty, and enjoy the prosperity of His blessing and grace, or we shall find ourselves and our children groaning under the slavery of socialism. 📖