

ChalcedonReport

MINISTRY NEWS FROM THE CHALCEDON FOUNDATION APRIL 2019

Irrational Humanism: The Reasoned Application of a False Worldview

by Mark R. Rushdoony



Our culture has become increasingly irrational in the last half century, and the pace of this trend seems to be accelerating. We have long been accustomed to the charge of racism being misused as a political weapon but in recent days the charge was made that even the original *Mary Poppins* movie was racist. If the current doom-and-gloom climate predictions (once a coming Ice Age, then global warming, now a generic “climate change”) are not absurd enough, we are offered the absurdity of “transgenderism.” We live in an age where *entertainers* make it a point to *offend* and politicians offer the panacea of socialism, despite all historic and contemporary examples of its destructiveness.

The Enlightenment’s Humanism: Reason, Not Revelation

Some of the absurdities we hear are likely not even believed by those who shout them. Their point is, in fact, to shout, to demand and obtain the cameras and microphones (I think the reference to *Mary Poppins* would be an example). In doing so, they deprive others the spotlight. Beyond that demand to be heard, however, there is a very real sense of mission and purpose behind these seemingly bizarre claims.

Humanism replaces the supreme authority of God with that of man. This supremacy may be seen as individual or collective. A person who says, “No one

can tell me what to do,” is positioning himself as the ultimate authority. Such a humanist will be anarchistic in his thinking. Most humanism views the authority of man as a collective. The highest collective voice of man is the state, so most humanism gravitates toward statism.

Because it sees man as “in charge,” humanism reacts to any transcendent authority, such as the God of Scripture, with contempt. They truly believe that because they are in control, they can repudiate all limitations, which they see as a vestige of belief in a transcendent God. The *transcendent* God of Scripture is replaced with their own *immanent* authority, so they act like gods because they have effectively declared themselves to be such. They may not claim the title of god but they assume the prerogatives of God. They are in charge. They believe they can decree their own truth and condemn those who do not fall in line with their agenda. They see no limit to their authority or prerogative. They believe they can change the world and that they must rid it of the “outdated” vestiges of a Christian worldview, beginning with its ethics.

Humanism has itself disintegrated into increasing irrationality in the modern era. The humanist response to the Reformation was the Enlightenment, which emphasized reason over the former movement’s stand for *revelation*; so many textbooks on Western history have referred to the Enlightenment as the “Age of Reason.”

The assumption that reason existed in the first place was a borrowed one, a carry-over from the earlier Christian age. The new rationalistic worldview of the Enlightenment merely created a model that *presumed* a world of law and order. This “natural law” was built into the universe and available for man to discover by his reason. Natural law and rationality were attributed to a distant “first cause” referred to as “God,” but the name was merely a philosophical construct unrelated to the Jehovah of Scripture. The true supreme being of Enlightenment thought was man.

Darwin: Revolution, Not Reason

The reliance of humanists on their “God” as first cause was increasingly seen as a concession in the nineteenth century. They were borrowing from Genesis because they did not have a worldview of their own that could give an overall context to their humanism.

The work of Darwin shattered the humanist’s rationalistic thinking and moved it in an entirely new direction, although still a man-centered one. Instead of a reliance on a “natural law” built into the universe by God to be discovered by the rationality of men, Darwin proposed a cosmos controlled by neither a sovereign nor by law, but by the properties of matter alone. Darwin saw chaos, chance, and randomness as man’s context, not law or reason.

Darwinism challenged humanism as much as Christian teaching because his was an entirely new model, a new

worldview based on a more consistent rejection of Biblical revelation. Darwin proposed that reason and rationality came very late to man's evolutionary history as products of civilization. Man's true roots, and the dynamic of the entire evolutionary scenario were chaos and survival of the fittest. It was this violence, not natural law, that had advanced man.

Humanism, after Darwin, embraced the new mythology of man's violent pre-history. Chaos and revolution were seen as a rejuvenating means of forcing the next stage of human development. Darwin's theory became crucial to the Marxist justification of violent revolution, and all subsequent justification of violence. Such things as traditions, truth, and status quo were seen as social efforts that retarded the necessary evolutionary dynamic of constant upheaval.

Modern political and legal theory has also been co-opted by Darwin's view of the regenerative power of revolution. Activist politicians and judges tend to side with every so-called "progressive" social trend. According to Darwinist theory, societies are like organisms: they adapt and change, or they stagnate and die. Tradition, including old Constitutional restrictions or social mores, is associated with stagnation and death, so Darwinian legal theory embraced radical change to eliminate old, regressive ideas and allow the evolution of social order. The "progress" of progressivism is via an intentionally created chaos out of which it is assumed a brave new world will emerge, unfettered by the traditions of the past. To the extent those traditions represent a Christian ethic or perspective, the push for change is especially vehement. Nothing is seen as more stagnant and repressive than Christianity and its "backward" look at ancient revelation as truth.

Confusing Times

We live in a world that believes in the nobility, and even the urgency, of destroying any tie to the past because it has a faith that whatever it destroys will be replaced with something better. While

we seek godly reconstruction on old foundations, they believe in the urgency of their destruction.

A faith in evolution is thus a faith in progress by destruction, and regeneration by revolution. The irrationality of humanism represents a Darwinian belief in creating new men and a new order by anarchy and violence. Its "rational" behavior is in terms of Darwin's mythological past and a faith in it as man's salvation.

Any worldview based on a mythological past is going to fail. The future belongs to the Kingdom of God and His Christ. Neither the anarchist nor the statist revolutionary will create a better order because hope based on Darwin's mythology is doomed to fail.

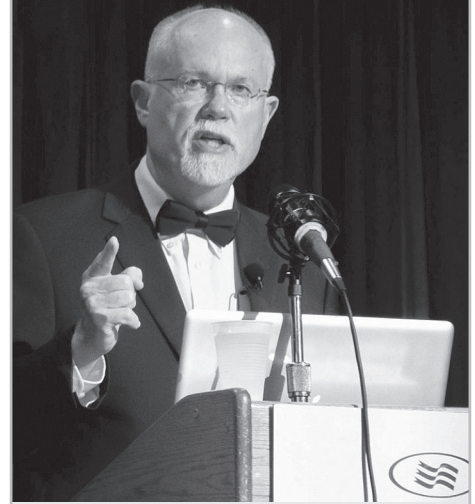
Humanism will fail because it is antithetical to the advancing Kingdom of God. It will fail because its anarchism makes it self-destruct. It is not overcoming because vandals cannot rule; it is imploding.

The Future

We cannot see a moment into the future, but we are called to live in terms of one we must believe by faith. Because we cannot see the future, God has, throughout history, revealed enough of it for men to believe that the future is never one of chaos or revolution but of His sovereign providence and grace. The people of Jesus Christ have been given a greater view of the future than any in history. This perspective should be the crux of our eschatology. Arguing the minutia of John's Revelation misses the larger message that Jesus is victorious, and the victory will one day be obvious and every knee will bow and every tongue confess it.

The irrationality of humanism is the reasoned application of its false worldview, its faith in man. The only response to the insanity of humanism is the reality of man's accountability to the Creator God, His grace to us in Jesus Christ, and the future we have in His love. 🙏

Domestic Abuse & The Church - 2019 Spring Conference



Saturday, April 27, 2019

10:00 AM – 3:00 PM CDT

Church of the Living God

8483 Al Highway 157,
Moulton, Alabama 35650

Come join us as we learn from Martin Selbrede, Vice-President of the Chalcedon Foundation, about Domestic Abuse and the church's responsibility in our day on this relevant and important topic.

Schedule:

10:00 AM - Lecture #1:

The Anatomy of Abuse

11:15 AM - Lecture #2:

Circling the Wagons

Lunch Break

1:15 PM - Lecture #3:

Justice and Healing

2:15 PM - Question & Answer Session

**This is a FREE conference,
but you must register at:**

<http://bit.ly/AbuseAndTheChurch>

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#SeekYeFirst: The Digital (R)Evolution

An Update on Chalcedon's Continuing Online Outreach

The landscape of communication and media is constantly in flux, but the true constant in all things is faith and ideas. The word *media* simply means broadcasting, and whether it's radio and newspaper, or television and social media, the real issue is always what is being broadcast and not the mediums themselves.

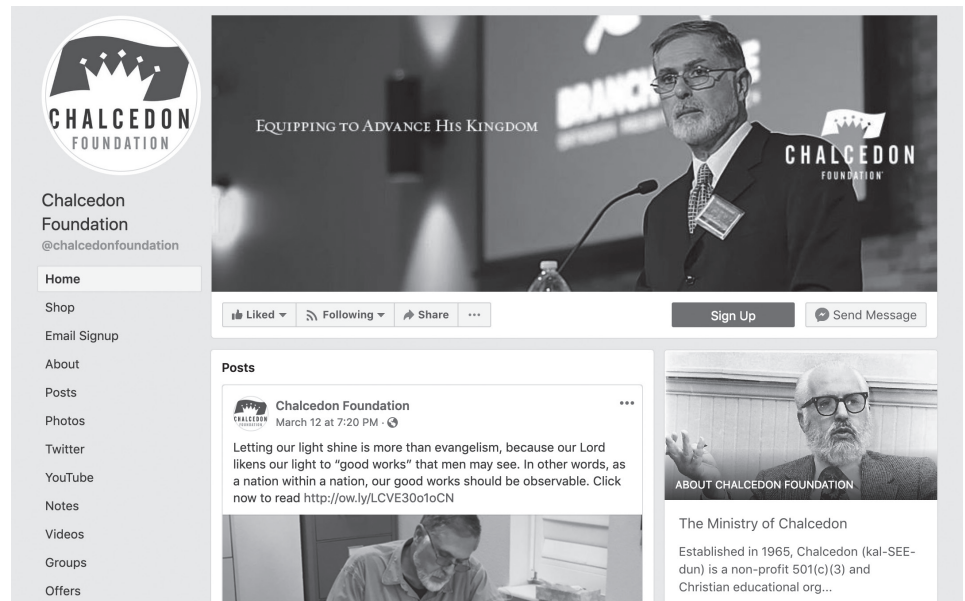
This is proven true especially for Chalcedon as we continue to expand our footprint on various forms of media such as social media, website, podcasting, video, and digital publishing. Even in the online space we're seeing that what sets us apart are the ideas we put forward and the faith we proclaim.

Algorithm: The Digital Deity

There was a time when the word *viral* was a frightening term linked to a public epidemic of sickness, but in today's online space, *viral* is what one seeks if he wants attention. It's now common to hear people ask one another if they've seen a viral, or trending, video much the same as they once asked if another had seen the previous night's episode of *M*A*S*H*.

Now, content producers are desperately trying to develop content that can go viral which means something that people will share with one another much the same as they share a cold or the flu. The challenge is not simply creating something that can go viral, but now content creators are up against a mysterious and powerful digital deity called the algorithm.

The algorithm is a calculating digital operation that determines what content is seen online and who sees it. For example, a typical Facebook user would be flooded daily with "posts" from the friends, businesses, organizations, and periodicals they follow if Facebook's algorithm didn't curate and set rules that limit what that user sees. Facebook's objective is to keep a user on the social media platform for as long as possible



Chalcedon's official Facebook Business Page

and being inundated with too much content or advertising will drive users away from the app.

For the businesses, organizations, and persons who run Facebook Pages (Pages are like having your own website within Facebook's platform), they feel the algorithm is penalizing them because so few of their posts are actually seen by their followers (subscribers). In 2017, the average reach of a Facebook post was about 8.92%, and these stats haven't improved much. In other words, if you have a 100 people following your Facebook Page, your post would likely only be seen by 9 people or less.

Facebook, however, is not penalizing these page owners, but this does mean that content creators must know their audience and what that audience wants to see. In this regard, page owners have to know the habits and interests of their followers far better than they know the technical tools of social media. Again, the media may change, but people and ideas don't.

The Faith Phenomenon

There are exceptions to the rule, and when it comes to social media, it's the cute, the trivial, and the provocative

that wins over the algorithms. However, this is not really beating the algorithm since the algorithm wants to know which video has viral potential because such content keeps users engaged on the platform. This is why memes and cat videos, as examples, do so well raking up millions of views. Social media is still new, but cat lovers have been around since ancient Egypt!

There is another exception to the rule, and that is faith and the faith community. Again, what's important to understand is that in the digital space it's what's going on with people that matters and not the digital platforms themselves. There may be a good many cat lovers on social media, but there are just as many who love God, and the more dedicated the Christian community, the better those Facebook Pages will perform who serve those communities.

This is certainly the case with Chalcedon where the average reach of some of our Facebook posts can be as high as 50% or more. Why is this the case? Why would a bunch of memes featuring quotes by R. J. Rushdoony have such a viral effect?

The reason for the greater organic reach is that those in the faith

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Nancy & Andrea of Homeschool Help



Chalcedon Q&A with Martin Selbrede

community are passionate about their beliefs, and they are more prone to share Christian posts because it's a digital form of evangelism. Sharing content on Facebook is an easy way to get a message out to more people. It's also a way to engage in debate with unbelievers. In fact, whether politics or religion, one could say that much of the contemporary culture war is a war of memes.

#SeekYeFirst

In Chalcedon's case, the Christian Reconstruction community that's present online is small but passionate—small in comparison to Facebook's two billion users. For the average follower of Chalcedon's Facebook page, it's a joy to see a quote, an article, or a video from Chalcedon because it both provides the user with encouragement and education in addition to giving them something they can share. Although on a much smaller scale, this is the viral effect in action as faithful Christians push out Chalcedon's content to an ever-widening audience.

The challenge for Chalcedon then becomes what sort of content should we post? With audiences consuming different forms of media whether print, audio, or video, we are laboring to meet as many as we can in the format they prefer. Granted, we can't cover all platforms or media expressions, but we find that what's most important is to push the firstness of the Kingdom of God.

What greater agenda is there? Is not the Kingdom of God the primary purpose behind all theology and



Rushdoony quotes beat Facebook's algorithm!

doctrine? Isn't the emphasis on God's law so that we can help extend and advance God's Kingdom in the earth? Our Lord said, "But seek ye first the Kingdom of God" (Matt. 6:33a), and for Chalcedon this means promoting the idea of the firstness of the Kingdom even if it's simply a hashtag: #SeekYeFirst.

Live Streaming Video

Each Sunday more and more of our online community are gathering around their computers or mobile devices to participate in the live streaming video broadcast of our Sunday Chapel Service featuring expository sermons by Mark Rushdoony on our Facebook page.

We've often heard from Christian families and individuals who struggle to find a church that teaches Christian Reconstruction, and our weekly live broadcasts are a great way for them to supplement their desire for such

teaching. As of the publishing of this issue of the newsletter, Mark has streamed 98 of his weekly sermons.

Our very own Andrea Schwartz has done the same with her weekly Homeschooling Help broadcast cohosted by Chalcedon supporter Nancy Wilk. It streams live on our Facebook page each Tuesday at 1:00 pm (EST), and they've published over 45 episodes to date!

Although he's on an extended break to tend to other projects, Chalcedon vice-president, Martin Selbrede, has graciously donated his time to hosting Chalcedon Q&A live video broadcasts (62 so far) on our Facebook page where he spends no less than an hour after Mark's Sunday sermons to answer questions. Martin's theological and scriptural knowledge are extensive, and viewers look forward to getting their questions answered in real time from the convenience of their computer or mobile device.

A Great Way to Keep Up!

We have other online programs such as the Out of the Question Podcast, the weekly Men's Roundtable Discussions, and our monthly Book of the Month Club discussions. If all this seems like a lot, it is, but we want to reach as many as we can wherever we can. If you'd like to keep up with all that we're doing, then take a moment today to register for our digital mailing list where you'll receive regular updates, schedules, articles, and special offers. Just visit <http://bit.ly/ChalcedonSignUp> and use your best email address. Thank you for all your support! 🙌