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**From the Selected Works of Steven Alan Samson**

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# Christian Reconstruction

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# AMERICAN CONSERVATISM

## *An Encyclopedia*



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dated the Jeffersonian ideal of inalienable rights and substituted the Marxist notion of state supremacy.

Chodorov's method of promoting individualism was via education rather than political action. As a teacher at the Henry George School, his emphasis was on teaching about liberty. Later, in his *Analysis* office, he taught classes for the Society of Individualists. From 1957 to 1961, Frank Chodorov taught at the Freedom School in Colorado. Chodorov was regarded as a great Socratic teacher.

In 1950, he wrote a pamphlet titled "A Fifty-Year Project" on the "transmutation of the American character from individualist to collectivist." Socialist organizations such as the Intercollegiate Socialist Society were promoting collectivism, and to counter this an individualist freedom organization for students was needed.

Chodorov rewrote the aforementioned pamphlet as an article for *Human Events* under the title "For Our Children's Children." This article attracted both attention and funding, leading directly to the founding of the Intercollegiate Society of Individualists, later renamed the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, which specialized in the distribution of free-market literature to interested students and the sponsorship of lectures by libertarian and conservative speakers on college campuses.

In his introduction to *Fugitive Essays*, Charles Hamilton states that ISI was the "high point" of "Chodorov's care of the Remnant," a biblical term that was a favorite of Nock's. After Chodorov suffered a stroke in 1961, some of his Georgist-libertarian friends founded the periodical *Fragments*, which carried on Chodorov's individualist philosophy under the editorship of Jack

Schwartzman. William F. Buckley's eulogy of Chodorov, "Death of a Teacher," delivered at his funeral on December 31, 1966, was reprinted in the October-December 1966 issue of that magazine.

—FRED FOLDVARY

### Further Reading

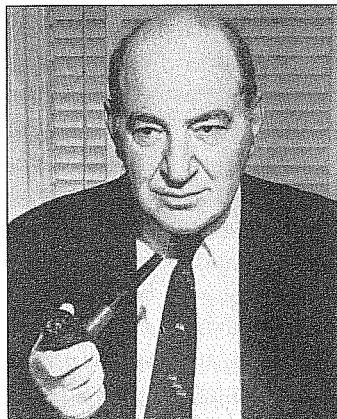
Edwards, Lee. *Educating for Liberty: The First Half-Century of the Intercollegiate Studies Institute*. Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 2003.

See also: Freeman; Human Events; *Intercollegiate Studies Institute*; *Jewish conservatives*; *think tanks*, *conservative*

## Christian Reconstruction

Christian Reconstruction is the name originally given to a program of the Chalcedon Foundation to promote a restoration of Christian faith in every area of life and thought. As currently used, this designation embraces a number of separate but interlocking circles of Calvinist scholars, ministers, and journalists who share Chalcedon's hope, in the foundation's words, in "the earthly victory of Christian principles and Christian institutions" based on "God's revealed system of external law."

Organized in 1965 by the Rev. Rousas John Rushdoony, a Presbyterian minister and missionary, and named after the great ecclesiastical council of AD 451, Chalcedon [kalSEEdon] currently publishes two periodicals, *Chalcedon Report* and *Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, and two audiotope series. Ross House Books is Chalcedon's book publishing arm.



Frank Chodorov

The central tenets of Christian Reconstruction are theological in description but held to be universal in application: presuppositionalism, theonomy, and postmillennialism.

*Presuppositionalism* refers to the apologetic system of the late Cornelius Van Til, a theologian at Westminster Seminary who taught that revelation is the beginning of all understanding and the promise of God its end. Reconstructionists believe that unstated presuppositions about the character of God and man underlie the problem of authority in modern society. Being religious in character this problem cannot be addressed by reason alone. Reality is defined authoritatively by the sovereign God rather than independently ascertained by autonomous men. Human reasoning, which depends on God's grace, is inescapably circular since it is circumscribed within the framework of God's creation.

*Theonomy* designates the system of biblical law that undergirds Western civilization and provides a universal standard of justice. Reconstructionists believe that, while Christ died for us sinners, he did not free us from our obligation to follow biblical law in all its detail. Thus, they hold that Old Testament law should be the basis for modern legislation.

*Postmillennialism* is a theological position regarding the coming fulfillment of God's plans in history. The postmillennial premise, as described by Rushdoony, is that the kingdom of God will grow until it fills the world: "People out of every tongue, tribe, and nation shall be converted, and the word of God shall prevail and rule in every part of the earth. There is therefore a necessity for action, and an assurance of victory."

Leading Reconstructionists have long attracted a conservative audience. Yet from its inception Chalcedon has taken a highly critical view of the conservative movement and does not promote a political program.

Several prominent conservatives such as M. Stanton Evans, Phillip M. Crane, and Howard Phillips have been associated or involved with Chalcedon at one time or another. Several early Reconstructionists, such as Gary North, Greg Bahnsen, and David Chilton, were influential within Reconstructionist circles. Many of their works, including book-length replies to critics, have been published by Gary North's Institute for Christian Economics.

—STEVEN ALAN SAMSON

### Further Reading

Bahnsen, Greg L. *No Other Standard: Theonomy and Its Critics*. Tyler, Tex.: Institute for Christian Economics, 1991.

Gentry, Kenneth L., Jr. *God's Law in the Modern World: The Continuing Relevance of Old Testament Law*. Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 1993.

North, Gary, and Gary DeMar. *Christian Reconstruction: What It Is, What It Isn't*. Tyler, Tex.: Institute for Christian Economics, 1991.

Rushdoony, Rousas John. *The Roots of Reconstruction*. Vallecito, Calif.: Ross House, 1991.

See also: Davenport, John; Rushdoony, Rousas John; Van Til, Cornelius

### Chronicles

Published as *Chronicles of Culture* from September 1977 to February 1986, *Chronicles* is the primary organ of opinion for the paleoconservative movement.

In 1977 John A. Howard retired as president of Rockford College (Rockford, Illinois) but remained president of the Rockford College Institute (founded in 1976, it became the Rockford Institute in 1981). The institute then began to publish *Chronicles of Culture*, edited by Leopold Tyrmand (1920–85), nom de plume of Jan Andrzej Stanislaw Kowalski. Tyrmand, a Polish novelist and editor, had