

The Long Arm of Government

More than half a century ago, the Catholic historian Christopher Dawson predicted, "...there will be no department of life in, which the state will not intervene and which will not be obliged to conform to the mechanized order of the new society. This is the situation that Christians have got to face. The great danger that we have to meet is not the danger of violent persecution but rather the crushing out of religion from modern life by the sheer weight of state-inspired public opinion and by the mass organization of society on a purely secular basis."

Today, we see Dawson's prediction becomes true. The government has become the most important single institution for most. It has a ferocious appetite for more intervention in the lives of citizens. One of the few certainties about the future is that "big government" will still be with us. Every movement to get the government off the backs of people has failed so far. Out of the many examples, I want to draw attention to two areas of government-imposed secularism: the economy and taxation. To get us out of the recession the government is urging citizens to go out and buy. Borrow and spend. I am not arguing for a particular approach to the economy to get us out of the recession. I am not an economist. But there is a secular principle at work. The government seems to have accepted the idea that economic growth along-side technological advance is the ultimate social good. The economic sphere has come to dominate every other aspect of life. We are not guided by the norms of stewardship but by the goal of ever increasing production. But when economic growth is treated as the ultimate goal and good, it is nothing but idolatry. Economical development should be open to scrutiny by the spiritual and moral dimensions in life. The questions of injustice, economic domination and stewardship may not be neglected.

Taxation also intrudes in the life of the citizen. Taxation is more than the government taking money out of the pockets of its citizens. In his book *War Against the Family*, William Gairdner asserts that government policies work against the family. He observes, "It is not an exaggeration to say that the family haven has been invaded more by the long arm of tax policy than by any other factor in our time." And he cites case after case to prove his point.

As we see our society collapsing, Christians dare not be silent over government imposed secularization and the hostility against the family seen at every level. But why do so few Christians speak out?

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