

## The Consequences of Ideas

### Lesson 18: Statism

*Before his death, Dr. Francis Schaeffer stated his biggest concern for the future of the church in America was in one word: "Statism."*

#### I. Introduction

- a. From the Civil War onward, both political Parties retained their respective power but something else emerged on the world political scene that would bring about a fundamental change in government around the **globe**.
- b. As the world moved to the end of the **19<sup>th</sup>** Century dark and boding clouds of this change were on the horizon and developments in Europe set the stage for what we now see in our own government today.
- c. For instance, in the 1870s - German universities, medical science, chemistry, physics, historical and classical scholarship become the **finest** in the world.
- d. During this period American scholars seeking PhD's attended German universities, where they absorbed the prevailing Hegelian statist and French **socialist** philosophy.
- e. Harvard and Yale converted from schools to train ministers of the Gospel to **secular** universities, focusing in the social sciences and promulgating evolution and the new "scientific" socialism.
- f. As American women started attending college, their exposure to socialist ideas being propagated in the universities resulted in many emerging as openly **socialist**.
- g. With their idealistic socialist notions, many worked to convert America from **private** property ownership to socialized regulation of the economy so that the disenfranchised could become members of the mainstream.
- h. It was during this time frame that caring for the less fortunate was transformed from a moral issue, handled by churches and local social organizations, into a national political issue of socialistic "**fairness**."
- i. **1881** - Bismarck established world's first social welfare system. He explained his motivation was to enable him to herd the German people like cattle, as a result of their dependency on the national state.
- j. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century **Statism** in all its forms is appearing all over the globe, most radically in the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in which Communism takes the center stage in Russia.
- k. Ideas have consequences and it was principally G.W.F. **Hegel** (1770-1831) whose ideas provided a philosophical basis for the formation of the Statist movement in Europe and America in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

#### II. Hegel

- a. Hegel is considered to be the modern philosophical father of Statism and Totalitarianism. It is in Hegel's philosophy that we find the full expression of the concept of the State as **superior** to the individual.
- b. The ideas presented by Hegel provided a **rationale** and paved the way politically for the advent of Hitler's Third Reich and Stalin's Russia.
- c. A philosophical idealist, he maintained the underlying reality of the universe is the nonmaterial, divine, dynamic, cosmic mind (God, the Spirit, Idea, World Reason, the Absolute, etc.) whose nature it is to evolve **constantly**.
- d. For Hegel, the State is the highest embodiment of the Divine Idea on earth and the chief means used by the Absolute in **manifesting** itself as it unfolds towards its perfect fulfillment.
- e. The State is a super-organic whole made up of individuals grouped into local communities, voluntary associations, etc. These parts have **no meaning** except in relation to the State, which is an end in itself.
- f. The State can demand that its parts be **sacrificed** to its interests. Each man is subordinate to the ethical whole—if the State claims one's life then the individual must surrender it.
- g. Because everything is ultimately one, the **collective** has primacy over the individual. Hegel's State has no room for the idea of individual rights or constitutional liberty.
- h. The State is an independent, self-sustaining super-organism having a purpose and will of its own. Each State rightly legislates its own **moral code**. True morality is expressed in and through the laws of the State.
- i. The State expresses the universal will and therefore the true will of every individual within it. Obedience to the will of the State is obedience to the true self because the State is the **true self** of the individual.
- j. Hegel calls for an antidemocratic authoritarian State that has absolute right over its component members precisely in order to attain maximal **freedom** for its own actions.
- k. The State is the Divine idea as it exists on earth... We must therefore **worship** the State as the manifestation of the Divine on earth, the State is the march of God through the world.
- l. The State (which is God) becomes what we turn to in our hour of need and is seen as our **source** of provision and sustenance.
- m. For Hegel, wars among nations are unavoidable and healthy representations of the evolution of the Absolute. The nation that wins the wars during a particular period is the one **preferred** by God.

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#### III. The Concern of the Church

- a. The decline from statehood to Statism happens when the government is perceived as or claims to be the ultimate reality. Statism, is at its roots a philosophy or worldview, **antithetical** to Biblical Christianity.. *Ex 20:3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me. KJV*
- b. The Founders believed that both the church and the state were entities ordained by God and subject to His governance. The state is considered to be an entity that is “under God” and does not **replace** Him.
- c. What has happened in the past few decades is the obfuscation of this original distinction between church and state, so that today the language of “*separation of church and state*” is in reality the separation of the state **from** God. *Ps 14:1 The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." NIV*
- d. What we are seeing in America is not merely that the state declares independence from the church; it also declares independence from God and presumes itself to rule with **autonomy**. *Ps 2:1-3 Why do the nations conspire<sup>d</sup> and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters." NIV*
- e. The Declaration and our Constitution find the notion of rights and liberties in the individual. Likewise, Christianity identifies the individual as responsible for his own outcomes, but, the Statist focuses on the efforts of the **collective**. *"Our individual salvation depends upon our collective salvation." B Obama 2008 Wesleyan University speech*
- f. The Biblical emphasis is on the **individual**: Individual freedom, individual responsibilities and individual virtue, honor and duty. *Ezek 18:20 The soul that sinneth, it shall die. KJV*
- g. The whole idea of a nation under God has been challenged again and again, and we have seen the exponential growth of government, so that the government now virtually engulfs all of the Biblical social **spheres of life**.
  1. Whereas the Bible declares that God is our **provider** and sustainer, the State is doing all that it can to usurp that role from Him. *Ps 121:1-2 I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. KJV*
  2. The **family** is under direct assault by the state in the way that it attempts to redefine the meaning of the word “marriage” and through the implementation of policies destructive of families. *Gen 1:27-28 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, KJV*
  3. Though the **church** is still somewhat tolerated in America it is tolerated only when it remains outside of the public square. *Acts 4:17-18 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. KJV*
  4. It is a Christian duty to **labor** and yet, here again the state has inserted itself into this sphere by imposing all kinds of regulations and policies that place man’s labor directly under the control of the state. *1 Thess 4:11-12 and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing. KJV*
  5. The **economy** has now come under the strict control of the federal government, which not only regulates the it, but considers itself responsible for controlling it. *Deut 8:18 But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, KJV*
  6. **Education** is the responsibility of parents and where education once was under the direction of local authorities and parental influence, it now is controlled and directed by federal legislation. *Deut 11:18-19 Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. KJV*
- h. Throughout the history of the Christian church, Christianity has always stood over against all forms of Statism. Statism is the natural and ultimate enemy to Christianity because it involves a usurpation of the reign of **God**.
- i. If Francis Schaeffer was right — and each year that passes makes his prognoses seem all the more accurate — it means that the church and the nation face a serious crisis in **our day**.
- j. If Statism prevails in America, it will mean the **death** of our religious freedom. Statism and true Christianity can not coexist because Statism can not tolerate the existence of authentic Christian belief and practice.
- k. We face perilous times where Christians and all people need to be vigilant about the rapidly encroaching elevation of the state to **supremacy**.

#### IV. Application

- a. It seems almost surreal that our Nation is morphing before our very eyes from the Founders focus on individual rights and liberties and the restraint of the state to exactly the opposite order of things.
- b. This week, listen with a discerning ear to the comments of newsmakers, politicians, and people around you to see if the issue of Statism as you now know it is as pervasive as this class has suggested that it is.
- c. It is virtually impossible for individuals to live and work in the U.S. today without being directly affected by state intrusion into their lives. By logical extension, where will this road lead? Can it be reversed?
- d. Given the facts of the emergence of Statism, what is your personal responsibility?
- e. How will you personally respond?