

III. The Government of the Church

A. The Nature of Government in General

1. A definition of government

*Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* defines "govern" as follows: 1. To direct and control; rule. 2. To regulate, restrain. 3. To be a rule or law for; to determine. To exercise authority. Govern connotes as its end a keeping in a straight course or smooth operation for the good of the individual and the whole.

2. The three functions of the government

in general, government exercises three basic functions:

a. The first function of government is PROTECTION

This refers to that authority that protects us from wrongdoing by others, or protects others from wrongdoing by us.

Example: the police; the FBI; the Criminal Code

Example: immigration laws concerning undesirable aliens

Example: custom regulations concerning dope, certain foods, plants

Example: mall tampering laws

Example: false alarm laws

b. The second function of government is that of ENSURING COOPERATION

This refers to that authority that makes laws which to some degree interfere with our freedom, which by and large have to do with things that are not wrong in themselves, but which guarantees cooperation, so that we do not interfere with one another's freedom.

Example: most traffic regulations (lights, signs, lanes, signals)

Example: regulations prohibiting trespassing on private property

Example: regulations regarding disturbing the peace

Example: anti-trust and monopoly regulations

c. The third function of government is DIRECTION

This refers to that authority that directs activity, that attempts to regulate details of operation or of life in order to get a job done.

Example: regulations in the armed forces