**Society**

Another avenue provided by God for relational development is participation in a secular society. We can define society as a social group living under one government system and order. It differs from culture in that, more than common ethnic features, it concerns: (1) geographic location, (2) the system of government, and (3) community order. A single society may host multiple cultures.

Although governments of the world are far from perfect, they still fill a meaningful place in God’s plan. They are established by God “for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right” (1 Pet 2:13-14; cf. Rom 13:1-6). The book of Proverbs speaks positively about government (Prov 28:16; 29:2-4, 14) and of paying taxes to it (Rom 13:6-7; Lk 20:25). We read, “The king's heart is {like} channels of water in the hand of Yahweh; He turns it wherever He wishes” (Prov 21:1). Therefore, rulers are worthy of respect and submission. Without governments, society would be reduced to chaos.

A ruler, though, should care for his nation: “A king who cultivates the field is an advantage to the land” (Ecc 5:9) and behave properly: “Take away the wicked before the king, and his throne will be established in righteousness” (Prov 25:5; сf. Prov 29:12; 16:10-12; 31:4-7). The Bible also reveals that the destiny of a ruler is in God’s hands. Although the Lord at times will tolerate a bad leader for a season, He can depose him or her at any time and raise up another (Dan 2:21).

Government authority, however, has limits. If certain civil laws contradict God’s laws, the latter are to be observed, even if it leads to persecution by the civil authorities. Peter and John are good examples here, when they resisted the Jewish authorities’ attempts to hinder their preaching of the gospel (Acts 4:18).

Uniting the world under one governmental system at first glance might seem advantageous. It would promote greater cooperation in solving world problems, allow greater mobility, minimize wars and political conflicts, etc.

On the other hand, the world once enjoyed such a unity and employed it to rebel against the Lord (Gen 11). As a result, God confused human languages to divide the people. The Psalmist also appeals to this principle in his polemic against his enemies: “Confuse, O Lord, divide their tongues, for I have seen violence and strife in the city” (Ps 55:9). The Bible also speaks of a future unification of nations under the antichrist, which also will be a conspiracy of rebellion (Revelation chp. 13). Therefore, in spite of the seeming advantages to world unity, in this fallen age it does not resonate with God’s plan.