Family Research Council®
Gary L. Bauer, President

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> "Where self-government is not possible in personal life, it remains to be seen whether it is possible in the republic... As individuals live beyond their means, so will the state. As individuals liberate themselves from costs, responsibilities, and a prudent concern for the future, so will their political leaders. When self-government is no longer an ideal for individuals, it cannot be credible for the republic."
>
> - Michael Novak
> Winner of the 1994 Templeton
> Prize for Progress in Religion

Dear Friend:

It's that time of year again. "The best of times, the worst of times," to paraphrase Charles Dickens.

Most of us need little reminder that April 15th is Tax Day. If you're like me (and the lines outside the Post Office suggest millions of Americans are), you wait until the last possible moment to drop your tax return in the mail. You may give thanks, as I do, that we live in a country where citizens are permitted to keep any portion of what we earn, but you probably also ask yourself how much of the tax bill you pay is either necessary or wise.

The above quotation from the social theorist Michael Novak points out the profound connection between personal behavior and the public good, especially in the area of economics. Taken to its logical conclusion, Novak's statement suggests that the almost simultaneous occurrence of America's sexual revolution and public debt explosion is no coincidence at all. It is not just that the sexual revolution imposed direct costs (though it did, in terms of devastating diseases like AIDS, welfare costs, increasing crime rates and so forth), but that individuals, in too many of their decisions, have left duty behind and ignored the long-term consequences.

The federal budgetary process has quickly taken on this same destructive character, as government officials have spent recklessly on short-term desires and lost the ability to say no