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## An Eminent Threat to Churches?

Monday, June 27, 2005

When the U.S. Supreme Court ruled last week that local governments could use economic development as a cause for taking property, most Americans seemed to think that the case had little to do with a threat to their own property—or the property of their churches.

The power of eminent domain allows governments [or governmentally-approved agencies] to take private property for the cause of the common good. Generally, these purposes have been limited to causes like roads, utilities, and similar projects. Now, based on the Court's decision in the case *Kelo et. al. v. City of New London*, governments may target private property for taking, claiming, for example, that the government needs additional tax revenue.

This news story explains why the threat may put churches at special risk. "Because all houses of worship are tax-exempt, they will continue to be attractive targets for seizure by revenue-hungry local governments," said Jared Leland, media and legal counsel of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty. In any event, the decision also represents a significant expansion of government power.

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