

# Ideas, Associations, and the Making of Good Cities

*Robert Driscoll*  
*Candidate for Juris Doctor*  
*Notre Dame Law School*

Swirling around the political discourse regarding global warming and record high gas prices are fundamental questions about city and community life in modern America. Increasingly, public officials and those in leadership positions speak of “smart growth” and its ugly alternative, “suburban sprawl.” Often forgotten, however, in the political wrangling is the heart of the entire issue: What is it that makes a city *good*? Recently, the New Urbanist movement in architecture and in law has tried to answer this question by revitalizing traditional center cities and preventing sprawl through higher density areas more dependent on the bicycle than the automobile.

As important as revitalizing physical spaces might be, however, it can only do so much. Missing from the dialogue on what ails American cities is indicative of the individualistic society in which Americans live: civic associations and authoritative institutions outside of government. Yet, associations and the ideas to which they are dedicated are essential if cities are to regain their prominence in American life. Only when this larger truth is recognized and understood will political discourse start to bear the fruit of a more meaningful community life.

## Introduction

Thomas Monaghan, founder of Domino’s Pizza and Ave Maria University and Law School, made waves recently by announcing his plan for a new, faith-centered town to be built near Naples, Florida.<sup>1</sup> Most of the news coverage surrounding Monaghan’s plan has focused on the legality of some of his proposals, including an outright ban on birth control and pornography. Monaghan has since backed off

those comments, fearing preemptive lawsuits from the American Civil Liberties Union among other groups. Still, a spokesman for the new development urges, “We’re just trying to create an environment where children will be safe on the streets... We’re truly just trying to create a town with traditional values.”<sup>2</sup>

The ACLU is mainly concerned about the implications that Monaghan’s project has for church-state relations in American life, and certainly the new town does raise questions about religion’s role in public life (and public life’s role in religion). However, the nature of the project also raises questions about just what is needed to make a so-called good city. Political commentary in recent years has touched on this issue, particularly discussing an end to urban sprawl and a rebuilding of local communities.<sup>3</sup> In the legal and architectural fields, the New Urbanist movement has sought to revive an interest in traditional urbanism and reinvigorate the building of aesthetically pleasing towns and neighborhoods. Always surrounding such movements are fundamental questions: What makes a city *good*? Is urban life mostly dependent upon the building of beautiful structures that encourage public spaces? Or is something more fundamental needed?

## The Foundation of Good Cities

The New Urbanist movement in architecture and law seeks to revitalize what the Congress for the New Urbanism calls urban centers.<sup>4</sup> Central to this idea is the building of mixed-use neighborhoods that accommodate a range of buildings and landscapes, including private residences, multifamily dwellings, and various commercial and retail places of business. In contrast to what is today seen as the norm of suburban sprawl (large developments of single uses, such as single-family residences), New Urbanists wish to rebuild a sense of community within the metropolitan area by using “universally accessible public spaces and community institutions” such as town squares, through architecture that “celebrate[s] local history, climate, ecology, and building practice.”<sup>5</sup>

The concept of center cities and towns standing alone has wide appeal. It evokes imagery of shaded lanes with street-side cafés populated by regulars and locals who all have a stake in the beauty of the local area. In a way, small communities and neighborhoods within larger municipal corporations recapture a vision of days past when America’s population was smaller and more conducive to communal organizations. Such a physical environment gives people the ability to experience real community at the local level instead of a sense of detachment from a nation fast approaching three hundred million.

Yet, the New Urbanist creed suffers from flaws in its founding idea as well as its public relations effort. While the idea of revitalized local communities can

appeal to a wide spectrum of political thought and attitudes, New Urbanists often sell their message in such a way as to alienate many of its potential buyers by pushing politically controversial ideas such as the harm to the natural environment caused by sprawl, the coming surge in energy prices due to drying up of oil reserves, and manmade global warming.<sup>6</sup> If, as New Urbanists would like the public to believe, traditional urbanism is a good, it should be a good regardless of the current debate over environmental policy and resource management. In other words, urbanism should be pitched as something that we as a society could benefit from because it is a good in and of itself and not simply because we are running out of oil or are causing global warming.

Philip Bess, a professor of architecture at the University of Notre Dame, engages in just this type of critique of New Urbanism; a movement that claims him as a member. Bess views the project of urbanism in Aristotelian terms: “The city [*polis*] is a community of communities that exists to promote the best life possible for its citizens, both individually and collectively.”<sup>7</sup> This is a loaded statement. It assumes, for example, that there is a best life that citizens may achieve individually and collectively and that not all goods are simply a matter of taste or feeling. This understanding of urbanism is “rejected, often vehemently, by many New Urbanists”<sup>8</sup> who are motivated by notions of moral relativism. Yet, as Bess notes, there is an inherent inconsistency in this line of argument. If New Urbanism is a good that ought to be implemented through laws and municipal codes,<sup>9</sup> then “New Urbanists can hardly make a credible intellectual claim that traditional urbanism is a genuine good, but all other goods are relative.”<sup>10</sup>

Instead of attempting to justify New Urbanism on a public-policy ground concerning man and the physical environment, Bess attempts to articulate a moral claim for traditional cities based on the goods they make possible. Cities exist in four separate orders: ecological, economic, moral, and formal. Each order overlaps with the others, and, in the best cities, complement each other. For example, the moral order that focuses on various civic goods and individual virtues restrains the economic order that tends toward excessive individualism. The formal order, the actual physical spaces in which citizens live and work, makes possible economic activity through well-designed structures. Bess believes that while the relationship between the economic order and the formal order is clear in our modern mind, “we have more trouble seeing the relationship between the formal order of a city and its moral order.”<sup>11</sup> Western civilization in general has understood the relationship of the formal order to the other orders and in particular to the moral order. This is evident in small-town America even today. A short look at the towns built in the nineteenth century reveals the centrality of government and religion in public life through the prominence and beauty

of courthouses, state capitols, and churches.<sup>12</sup> With the loss of understanding of the importance of the formal order to other things besides economic prosperity, Bess believes that today's suburbia is lacking the formal cause of a city in which the good life can be lived.

To that end, Bess suggests a new natural law common precept regarding urban life: "Human beings should make mixed-use walkable settlements."<sup>13</sup> In philosophical jargon, a natural law precept is a concept that receives its force not from contingent facts and practical consequences but rather from its inherent and self-evident reasonableness. The most basic precepts are propositions to which the human mind readily assents, such as Aristotle's opening line in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that "every art and every inquiry, and likewise every action and choice, seems to aim at some good, and hence it has been beautifully said that the good is that at which all things aim."<sup>14</sup> From this general principle, which by itself does not direct one toward a particular course of action, one can deduce certain other precepts directly, including "do not take innocent human life" and "treat others as you yourself would wish to be treated."<sup>15</sup> These precepts, which Bess describes as primary and immediate, lead to other propositions that may not be absolute but have a high enough degree of inherent reasonableness that when followed they almost always contribute to human flourishing. The directive to make mixed-use walkable settlements is just such a precept, according to Bess. This directive is accomplished through the New Urbanist concept of an urban transect, which zones areas based on density and building type instead of use.

Unfortunately, Bess fails to identify the inherent reasonableness of such devices and instead rests his argument on the inherent badness of typical post-World War II suburbia. Indeed, such "formal patterns of sprawl encourage unjust and environmentally unsustainable human settlements" that should not be emulated.<sup>16</sup> Far from making an argument about the urban form's inherent goodness for human flourishing, Bess seems to present an either/or proposition: One must accept either sprawl or urbanism. The former is undesirable, so one is only left with the latter. Besides failing to advance a positive argument about his precept's inherent reasonableness, Bess also ignores the policy reasons why America has chosen suburban development in the post-World War II era. American prosperity has given individuals the choice to move out of high-density areas, and they have readily done so, argues Gregg Easterbrook, and "that's an important social achievement, not a cause for angst."<sup>17</sup> Suburbia has the benefit of being more affordable to more people as they escape the often oppressive taxes and corrupt management of central cities to live in smaller communities with local, responsive governments. Though sprawl may have downsides to it, sides that Bess readily attacks, it is not clear that those downsides mean that current developments on

the outskirts of metropolitan areas are inherently undesirable to the point that no reasonable person can deny their inherent opposition to human flourishing.

Modern suburban developments and traditional city life have their upsides and downsides; it is conceivable that either could be good or bad at promoting the good life. The type of community-centered life that New Urbanists wish to recapture with aesthetically pleasing buildings and walkable communities are largely achievable in either context so long as the people living in those communities understand and adhere to a common set of principles that promote prosperity. The American experience, and particularly the experience of American Catholics, teaches those willing to learn that neighborhoods are not imposed from the top down but rather are built and maintained by individuals and associations dedicated to a common proposition held to be true and good.

## Ideas and Associations in Urban Life

To Bess' credit, he does recognize the central failing of the New Urbanist project (or of any political or social movement): the lack of a coordinating central ideal to which the group's actions are aimed. In other words, Aristotle's good toward which human activities strive. When New Urbanists disclaim any objective notions of truth, as Bess argues they do, they undermine not only their own intellectual credibility<sup>18</sup> but also remove a necessary prerequisite for purposeful action. This essentially modern notion of disclaiming fidelity to a central idea that one holds as true leads to the failure to understand that "good urban form is a necessary but not sufficient condition for good urbanism."<sup>19</sup> In all areas of life, the idea drives action. For example, before there could be an American Revolution in the political sense, there had to be a revolutionary idea in the minds of the people.<sup>20</sup> The fact that ideas drive action is not only apparent in big things such as revolutionary movements or the building of good, workable cities. Anyone involved in writing, or any form of discussion or argumentation, knows that one can quickly lose focus and direction without a unifying thesis.

Bess is right to point out that "there is a reciprocal relationship between cultural character and the physical environment."<sup>21</sup> Ideas are not completely disembodied from physical reality and oftentimes the environment one lives in shapes the particular expression of one's ideas. Yet, the impetus for the building and maintaining of such environs are the ideas that members of the community hold, practice, and express through civic organizations. It should be remembered that Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* that teaches individuals how to live the good life precedes his *Politics*, which speaks of institutions making the good life possible. It is the formation of individual human character through ideas that shapes the

human soul and influences human relations. Changing the physical environment alone may have beneficial effects, but it can only go so far. Indeed, imposing formal order structures without moral order foundations can do positive damage to the community. Economist Randal O'Toole argues that New Urbanist designs actually speed community deterioration by providing easy targets for criminals and other social parasites. Says O'Toole, "Actual experiments have shown that the introduction of New Urban elements, such as pedestrian paths, into existing neighborhoods dramatically increase crime, while the removal of elements such as the privatization of common areas dramatically reduces crime."<sup>22</sup> Though there may be goods associated with New Urbanist designs, grafting such principles onto a society without moral character sufficient to ignore the temptations to unlawful behavior presented by easy targets will have negative effects. Instead, what we as a society must realize is that our designs are only as good as the individuals who support them. When people hold certain ideas as true and good, specific modes of action will emerge from those beliefs and enmesh themselves in all areas of life, including architecture and city making.

Indeed, a loss of an understanding about what is good for humans and human society, that is "what the human being is and is for"<sup>23</sup> results in external actions and choices that affect human environment and culture. In his book *Crabgrass Frontier*, Kenneth Jackson describes the evolving concept of public housing in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that led to the now infamous projects that dot many major American cities. Early housing reformer Edith Elmer Wood "argued that social behavior was conditioned by housing and that government action to replace the slums would improve citizenship, lower welfare costs, and reduce crime and delinquency."<sup>24</sup> Reformers such as Wood believed that a person's physical environment was determinative of their character and ability to live in society; physical environment would eliminate social pathologies not just by making it harder for criminals to accomplish their crimes but also by affecting the very character of the people. The old slums of the inner city had to be replaced by federally sponsored housing programs that would encourage communal sympathies through the building of high-rise structures. The hopes that accompanied these changes in physical environment and government policy soon gave way to dreary reality. Jackson calls the projects "poorly maintained, segregated, cheaply constructed, and often physically dangerous..."<sup>25</sup> The best evidence of this failure is the move in many major cities to tear down the high-rises and start anew. Chicago, for example, has recently begun a \$1.5 billion reconstruction plan to replace what were "long symbols of the nation's failed public housing policies,"<sup>26</sup> the Robert Taylor Homes.

Jackson does not attribute the failure of public housing to anything wrong in the driving idea articulated by Edith Wood. Instead, the problem was thinking that “one solution could so vastly reduce poverty and social pathology.”<sup>27</sup> The management of the projects and the funding levels were inadequate to the goals; a more comprehensive and more expensive program could go a long way toward remedying the insufficiencies of what was at heart a good plan. However, at the practical level, the funding of inner-city urban renewal programs has been remarkably high; so much so that it leads one to question the efficacy of such federal spending. In the past thirty years, the federal government has spent more than \$2.5 trillion on various city-related projects.<sup>28</sup> Yet, during the same time that the government has ramped up efforts to spend its way out of urban problems, those same problems have accelerated, causing a drop in the urban population in America.

Ironically enough, the solution to the failures we see today can be found in the very physical conditions that were literally run down by bulldozers in the mid-part of the twentieth century. One of those neighborhoods was Bronzeville in Chicago, which was razed to make room for the now-defunct Robert Taylor Homes and Stateway Gardens. Areas such as Bronzeville were hardly ideal. The residents, overwhelmingly African-American, were generally poorer than their white counterparts and often suffered the sting of overtly segregationist laws or enforcement. Yet, as Alan Ehrenhalt argues,

Bronzeville flourished because of adversity. Its residents became experts at community building because they felt the urge to band together against a larger and less friendly world that excluded them from any meaningful participation, no matter how respectable they might be. They cultivated a sense of the future that gave them the patience and the strength to deal with the present.<sup>29</sup>

This admirable persistence in the face of adversity was driven by the collective culture that was preached into the residents of Bronzeville every Sunday: “the need to live in the midst of personal sin, individual weakness, and yet to rise above it.”<sup>30</sup> This sense of individual responsibility supported by community institutions was ripped away by the materially richer but ultimately spiritually poorer public housing projects. Community institutions were destroyed and scattered; and these valuable associations to guard the idea of individual morality and social responsibility the neighborhoods withered away. This sense of hope and the ability to think about more than the moment are things that are not replaceable through government subsidies or free housing.

Bronzeville is a stark example of how essential institutions and individual character are for a community. Proponents of the new housing projects saw them as a step up physically: replacing what amounted to shanties, often with common kitchens, with well-designed and relatively spacious apartments. Yet, this change in physical environment could not overcome the destruction of local institutions that grounded community life. True communities are built by individuals who hold certain beliefs about the value and goodness of community life. These beliefs, in turn, lead to the maintenance of institutions and organizations that act both as keepers of those beliefs and instruments by which they can be expressed. Similarly, these same beliefs are reflected in the architecture and physical characteristics of a neighborhood. To the extent that these deeply held convictions and associations reflect something that is true about humans living in society, they will succeed in promoting the good life for the community's members.

## Catholicism and Local Communities

Perhaps nowhere in American culture is the effect that ideas and institutions have on individuals and communities more evident than the Catholic Church and the old Catholic neighborhoods that used to, and in many cases still do, dominate urban areas. Ehrenhalt gives a vivid description of this sort of community-centered life in St. Nick's Parish on the south side of Chicago. St. Nick's was a world of its own, bound together by the lack of easy transportation outside its confines but more importantly by the shared values and religion of the vast majority of its residents. The attitudes of the people of St. Nick's stand in stark contrast to the virulent individualism of today. According to Ehrenhalt, parents were parents to children of the whole neighborhood, and the intricate social network made sure that word quickly spread of any childish misdeeds. Authority was not seen as stifling individualism, rather "the feelings of safety and familiarity that existed for those growing up in St. Nick's parish were in part created by mothers who stayed home and knew more about what teenagers were up to than the teenagers wanted them to know."<sup>31</sup>

This type of communal life was of course supported and perpetuated by the Church, which remained the center for social life within the parish:

Formally church-sanctioned institutions—notably marriage and the family—were crucial to inculcating virtue, but so too were local groups ranging from church societies to trade unions and political parties. Such structures were essential to creating a civil society, one capable of resisting either an overreaching state or an unchecked market economy.<sup>32</sup>

Religion permeated the neighborhood and, in much the same manner as the residents of Bronzeville, moral lessons were taught every Sunday and enforced through the confessional and the constant involvement of the clergy in neighborhood life. St. Nick's also supported a variety of neighborhood organizations that provided services within the parish. Holy Name Societies tied the men of the parish together through liturgical events as well as a host of social activities including Holy Name breakfasts, while the women of the parish helped with the daily maintenance of the church building through the Altar and Rosary Society.<sup>33</sup>

Of course, to modern ears, tales of 1950s parish life often evoke imagery (perhaps somewhat unfairly) of harsh discipline and uncompromising authority. Yet, it was this very authority that made a powerful sense of community possible.<sup>34</sup> It is undeniable that neighborhoods like St. Nick's have changed radically since their heyday described by Ehrenhalt despite the continuity in things such as the distinctive architecture of the houses and church that characterize the area. One no longer sees priests and nuns in full religious dress walking the street, caring for the residents of the parish. In other words, St. Nick's changed because the Church itself changed.<sup>35</sup>

In order to reestablish what Ehrenhalt calls "anchors of stability" that "help us through times of ... unsettling change,"<sup>36</sup> one needs to rebuild the ideas and institutions that supported parish neighborhoods in the mid-part of the twentieth century. The roots of that success lie not only in the form of the community but in the moral institutions that gave rise to that community. Sociologist Joseph Varacalli calls this concept a "plausibility structure" that he defines as a "subcultural set of institutional arrangements that was capable of successfully socializing Catholics and constituted the fruit of the organizational revolution ushered in by the Baltimore provincial and plenary councils commencing in 1829 and ending in 1884."<sup>37</sup> These councils were successful in putting together a consistent and believable moral and theological message that was then implemented and maintained through parish churches and organizations, resulting in strong, self-perpetuating neighborhoods. The strength of the Catholic Church as an organizational feature of community life was at "its historical maximum effectiveness during the post-World War II period."<sup>38</sup> The parish church provided both a physical and a moral anchor for the local residents. Catholics moved up the socioeconomic ladder in America even as their faith in and trust of the Church deepened and became more orthodox.<sup>39</sup> In other words, the kinds of goods that we associate with community life were made possible by more than the formal order structures of the neighborhood. In these parish neighborhoods, the Catholic Church provided the institutional structure for the dense social networks of such enormous importance.<sup>40</sup>

The deterioration of these old neighborhoods that is so evident today came about as the Church lost its hold over the beliefs and morés of the individuals living in the neighborhood. Efforts to curb increasing violence and general lawlessness were doomed to failure because “those responsible for the violence seemed increasingly distant from an institution once notable for its hold on working-class males.”<sup>41</sup> The Second Vatican Council helped speed this change, though perhaps unintentionally, by among other things opening up the liturgy to more individualistic expression. This in turn undermined the authority of the local parish priest and allowed residents to shop around for whichever type of Mass best suited their tastes. At the same time, the mainstream American culture was exerting ever more pressure on American Catholics; in many ways asking them to give up the faith and communities that had led them to prosperity. A newly minted American dream of pluralism, individualism, and suspicion of authoritative institutions drove many Catholics out of their enclaves and into the larger culture. As this occurred, “the emphasis in religion started to shift *for cultural and religious reasons*—from a, more or less, exclusive participation in one’s own religion ... to a tacit acceptance of a biblically based common denominator religion....”<sup>42</sup> With no authoritative idea or institution to hold them together, American Catholics blended into the larger culture, abandoning even the physical trappings of their once strongly held community values. Speaking of St. Nick’s today, Ehrenhalt observes, “A block is not really a community in this neighborhood anymore. Only a house is a community, a tiny outpost dependent on television and air-conditioning, and accessible to other such outposts ... almost exclusively by automobile.”<sup>43</sup>

## Conclusion

The kinds of architecture promoted by New Urbanists are certainly a boon for American community life. They present, at the very least, the option for local communities to choose beautiful, functional buildings.<sup>44</sup> Yet, that option is not a solution to the kind of individualism that characterizes America today. Rather, it allows individuals and institutions that have already staked out a moral claim and that also provide a structured set of principles for living the good life to have a ready tool to promote their cause. In other words, physical environments created by New Urbanists will not in and of themselves create better communities. G. K. Chesterton makes a similar point: “A mother does not give her child a blue bow because he is so ugly without it. A lover does not give a girl a necklace to hide her neck. If men loved Pimlico as mothers love children, arbitrarily, because it is *theirs*, Pimlico in a year or two might be fairer than Florence.”<sup>45</sup>

The ugliness of modern architecture and the deterioration of modern communities perceived by the New Urbanists are undoubtedly linked. However, the solution to the latter does not alone lie in resurrecting the beauty of past architectural forms. Rather, what is needed is deliberation about what it means to be human and what ideas should drive man's interaction in society. In their book *Architectural Principles in an Age of Historicism*, Robert Jan van Pelt and Carroll William Westfall describe what they term "Architectural Historicism," or the notion that "humanity is the ever evolving and ever changing offspring of history" and that ideas mean nothing outside the context of a particular era.<sup>46</sup> Old buildings and past architectural forms cannot teach us today about eternal truths (in this context, truths about what makes good buildings) but only what those buildings represent about a certain era; a *fact* alone. This is a mistake; good buildings depend upon principles of architecture that do not change just as much as good communities are built by people animated by certain ideas and the institutions that perpetuate those beliefs. For, "[T]he purpose a people have in living together defines the civil form they will find useful, and the civil form defines what is required of the architectural and urban form."<sup>47</sup> In other words, good communities produce good architecture.

To reclaim the benefits of community life that were lost as neighborhoods such as St. Nick's and Bronzeville broke up, it is necessary to do more than build denser areas in which walking is more convenient and automobiles less necessary. Instead, the institutional authority that defined and shaped those communities must be either rebuilt or replaced. Those institutions, in turn, are only as good as the founding ideas that will guide them going forward. We can never hope to reclaim the exact state of affairs of communities in the past. Technological and cultural changes prevent such a reversion. However, emphasis on the importance of authoritative institutions and organizations (excluding government) in individual lives would help restrain the rampant individualism that has caused the break-up with which we live with today. Revitalization of American community life thus depends on giving people something good in which to believe and a set of institutions and structures in which to believe it.

## Notes

1. Dahleen Glanton, *Chicago Tribune*, "Catholic Billionaire Envisions City of God," 31 March 2006, 1.
2. Brian Skoloff, *The Associated Press*, "Pizza Magnate Modifies Plans for Florida Town," March 3, 2006.

3. See, for example, Robin Toner, *New York Times*, “Kids in the Balance,” sec. 7, 62, 17 November 2002 (“The way so many postwar communities were built—the suburban sprawl that Al Gore tried to make an issue in 2000—works against the very idea of community. ‘A family that lives in a neighborhood with sidewalks, playgrounds and pleasant stores within walking distance has a very different relationship to the community than a family that must drive to purchase even the most basic amenity,’ the Gores write”).
4. Congress for the New Urbanism, “Charter of the New Urbanism,” <http://www.cnu.org/charter> (last accessed April 10, 2007).
5. *Ibid.*
6. This attitude is present on the “New Urbanism” webpage at <http://newurbanism.org/index.html> (last accessed April 10, 2007). The second half of the opening page promotes the positive benefits of New Urbanism including attractive pictures of possible developments. Yet the first half immediately barrages the reader with alarmism about “peak oil” as well as the Kyoto Protocol (and a short *homage* to Al Gore’s “An Inconvenient Truth”). Those inclined to sympathize with the New Urbanist project could easily be put off by ascribing the good of urbanism to the debatable propositions about impending environmental calamities that are immensely controversial.
7. Philip Bess, “The New Urbanism: From Aristotle and God to Baseball,” The Claremont Institute, <http://www.claremont.org/projects/pageid.1999/default.asp> [hereinafter Bess, Aristotle].
8. Philip Bess, “The *Polis* and Natural Law: The Moral Authority of the Urban Transect,” 5, Thursday Architects, <http://www.thursdayarchitects.com/Texts/The%20Polis%20and%20NL-Center%2015%20rev.pdf>.
9. Or, at least, not be made illegal through traditional zoning measures.
10. Bess, “The *Polis* and Natural Law,” 24.
11. Philip Bess, “Civic Art and the City of God: Traditional Urban Design and Christian Evangelism,” *Journal of Markets & Morality* 6, (2003): 33, 40, available at [http://www.acton.org/publicat/m\\_and\\_m/2003\\_spring/bess.html](http://www.acton.org/publicat/m_and_m/2003_spring/bess.html).
12. A brief search on Google will net a large number of pages with pictures of old courthouses and other historic buildings that exemplified nineteenth-century small-town life. See, for example, [http://www.bc.edu/bc\\_org/avp/cas/fnart/fa267/19\\_rel.html](http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/cas/fnart/fa267/19_rel.html).
13. Bess, “The *Polis* and Natural Law,” 11.
14. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1, trans. Joe Sachs (Newburyport: Focus Publishing, 2002).
15. Bess, “The *Polis* and Natural Law,” 10.
16. *Ibid.*, 22.

17. Gregg Easterbrook, "Suburban Myth," *The New Republic*, 15 March 1999, 19.
18. See note 10 and accompanying text.
19. Bess, "The *Polis* and Natural Law," 2, n.2.
20. Jefferson argued that the Declaration of Independence (the "idea") was an "expression of the American mind" in 1776. Thomas Jefferson to Henry Lee, May 8, 1825, in *Thomas Jefferson, Writings*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Library of America, 1984), 1500. This mindset, of course, led to the Revolution and ultimately to the Constitution.
21. Bess, "The New Urbanism: From Aristotle and God to Baseball."
22. Randal O'Toole, "A Response to Philip Bess and the New Urbanism," The Claremont Institute, posted February 8, 2005, available at <http://www.claremont.org/projects/pageid.2033/default.asp>.
23. Richard Garnett, "American Conversations With(in) Catholicism," *Michigan. Law Review* 102, no. 6 (2004): 1216.
24. Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 220.
25. *Ibid.*, 228.
26. Melita Marie Garza, "CHA to be Torn-up; Rebuilt," *Chicago Tribune*, 6 February 2000, 1. Yonkers in New York is seeing similar changes in the structure of its public housing. See Fernanda Santos, "New Take on Public Housing: Destroying It to Save It," *New York Times*, 7 August 2006, sec. B, 1.
27. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 229.
28. The Cato Institute, "Cato Handbook for Congress, #26 Urban Policy," available at [www.cato.org/pubs/handbook/hb105-26.html](http://www.cato.org/pubs/handbook/hb105-26.html).
29. Alan Ehrenhalt, *The Lost City: The Forgotten Virtues of Community in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 147.
30. *Ibid.*, 171.
31. *Ibid.*, 98.
32. John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth Century Urban North* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 24.
33. Ehrenhalt, *The Lost City*, 115–18.
34. "Authority and community have in fact unraveled together, but few mourn the passing of authority." *Ibid.*, 18. Ehrenhalt also discusses the prevalence in the literature of views that look back on such authority as pervasively negative. *Ibid.*, 134–35.

35. This change occurred mainly after Vatican II. Whether it was the resulting documents themselves or subsequent interpretations of those documents that led to the change is beyond the scope of this article.
36. Ehrenhalt, *The Lost City*, 280.
37. Joseph A. Varacalli, *The Catholic Experience in America* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2006), 96.
38. *Ibid.*, 46.
39. *Ibid.*, 87.
40. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 15.
41. *Ibid.*, 261.
42. Varacalli, *The Catholic Experience*, 90.
43. Ehrenhalt, *The Lost City*, 254.
44. Indeed, it is conceivable that even “sprawl communities” could organize themselves around a center town area that would promote some of the goods that New Urbanists wish to cultivate while still ensuring low-density, affordable housing. Even the areas of sprawl themselves could benefit by simple modifications including sidewalks, more trees, and front porches.
45. G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), 73. Chesterton goes on to state that, “Men did not love Rome because she was great. She was great because they had loved her.” *Ibid.*
46. Robert Jan van Pelt and Carroll William Westfall, *Architectural Principles in an Age of Historicism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 4. For more on what many perceive as the malaise of modern architecture, see Henry Hope Reed, *The United States Capitol: Its Architecture and Decoration* (New York: Norton, 2005), x–xi.
47. van Pelt and Westfall, *Architectural Principles*, 47.