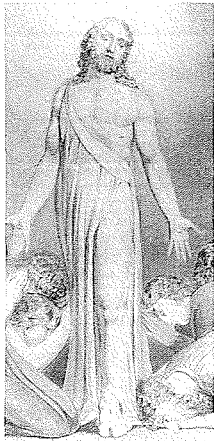

NEW TITLES

History
**JESUS THROUGH
THE CENTURIES:
His Place in the
History of Culture**

 by Jaroslav Pelikan
 Yale, 1985
 270 pp. \$22.50


Consider the various and sometimes conflicting images men have formed of Christ. Francis of Assisi, the 13th-century Italian saint, believed that he was imitating Christ by renouncing the world and living in poverty; by contrast, Charles Sheldon, a 19th-century American author, presented Jesus as the model corporate businessman. In the spirit of the Age of Reason, Thomas Jefferson edited the "rubbish" from the Gospels to present a "purified" account of Christ as enlightened moralist. And to Romantics such as William Blake, Jesus was nothing less (or more) than the embodiment of the "poetic." Recounting the genesis, use, and abuse of these and other images, Pelikan, the noted Yale historian, has produced a work of scholarly virtuosity. It is also an insistently moral book. Pelikan asks, for instance, whether anti-Semitism would have been such a dark blot on Western history if later Christians had not forgotten (or suppressed) the earliest image of their Savior—that of Christ as Rabbi Jeshua bar-Joseph. Interpreting visual as well as written sources, crude Anglo-Saxon crosses as well as the novels of Dostoyevsky, Pelikan demonstrates that, to believers and non-believers alike, Jesus of Nazareth has been "the dominant figure in the history of Western culture for almost 20 centuries."

**THE CRABGRASS
FRONTIER:
The Suburbanization
of the United States**

 by Kenneth T. Jackson
 Oxford, 1985
 352 pp. \$21.95

To the early 19th-century American city-dweller, *suburban* had unsavory connotations. By 1870, things had changed: Americans yearned for suburban homes, although they still wanted the city to serve as the hub of their activities. Inexpensive building materials, cheap transportation, new construction techniques, federal tax benefits for homeowners—all helped to ease the exodus from the central city. The Federal Housing Administration, created by Franklin Roosevelt in 1934 to insure long-term mortgages, also contributed by favoring new-home construction over inner-city renovations. In 1980, two-thirds

of all Americans were living in "single dwellings surrounded by ornamental yards." Jackson, a Columbia historian, chronicles America's massive residential shift in illuminating detail, pointing to its effects, including the dispersion of work, family, and friends. Ironically, he observes, "the intelligent compromise" sought by 19th-century Americans—to live in a spacious, quiet neighborhood while enjoying contact with urban culture—has largely been replaced by a "general suburban resistance to . . . contacts with the larger society." Jackson notes the recent "re-gentrification" of city enclaves, but he predicts that energy shortages rather than fashion will eventually spell the demise of the suburban way of living.

**THE POLITICAL
MYTHOLOGY OF
APARTHEID**

by Leonard Thompson
Yale, 1985
293 pp. \$22.50

In 1686, the Dutch ship *Stavenisse* went down off the east coast of what is now South Africa. In three groups, the survivors set off for the settlement of Cape Town, encountering several African tribes on the way. Later, the Dutch reported that the natives they met were "civil, polite, and talkative," living in stable communities and engaged in agriculture. Twentieth-century archaeologists have established the presence of blacks in the south since about 300 A.D. Yet in 1981, one white South African neatly summarized the Afrikaner version of the region's early history: "There were only Bushmen in South Africa when the whites landed at the Cape. The blacks were in Rhodesia. Basically we came here more or less at the same time." This "myth of the vacant land" is only one part of the white South African political mythology explored by Yale historian Thompson. Forged by Afrikaners in their struggles against the English in the 19th century, this cluster of beliefs serves to justify apartheid and white dominance. All nations, Thompson notes, have their myths. But the Afrikaners' myth has become "an independent conservative force" that prevents the regime from making changes. It is even taboo to examine the old beliefs. As recently as 1979, a mob tarred and feathered an Afrikaner scholar for proposing to study the Covenant myth (according to which the Afrikaners' victory over the Zulus in 1838