

successes and playing down its brutality. Equally puzzling is Zimmerman's comment that the Slovenes "bear considerable responsibility for the bloodbath that followed their secession"; elsewhere, he implies that Milosevic and Tudjman would have gone on their rampage regardless of what Slovenia did. These are minor distractions, however, in a book that is required reading for anyone concerned about America's future role in the Balkans—and in the larger world.

—Stephen Miller

HOME FROM NOWHERE:
Remaking Our Everyday World for the Twenty-First Century.

By James Howard Kunstler. Simon & Schuster. 318 pp. \$24

No one who is concerned about the spread of suburban sprawl in the United States can avoid paying serious attention to the New Urbanist movement—and to this manifesto by one of its leading publicists. Everyone complains about sprawl, but only these architects and planners know what to do about it: build main streets (not malls), with adjoining residential streets organized in something like a grid, houses placed close together and close to the street, and plenty of green spaces. In a word, towns.

Kunstler, the author of eight novels and one previous nonfiction book, has a weakness for bombast—is it really true that “we have become, by sheer inertia, a nation of overfed clowns, crybabies, slackers, deadbeats, sadists, cads, whores, and crooks”? But he is also clever and persuasive, never more so than when explaining why the contemporary American suburb breeds such a strong, if vague, “dis-ease.” Simply allowing people to walk to their destinations rather than

drive, he argues, would be “spiritually elevating. . . . When neighborhoods are used by pedestrians, a much finer scale of detailing inevitably occurs. Building facades become more richly ornamented and interesting. Little gardens and windowboxes appear. . . . In such a setting, we feel more completely human.”

We need not share Kunstler's conviction that bad design is the chief cause of eroding American communities to recognize that it is *one* of the causes—and one of the few we have the power to influence directly through law. The community zoning ordinance is the genetic code of the modern suburb, making it virtually impossible to build the kinds of towns we once erected as a matter of course. As Kunstler points out, today's zoning codes leave no alternative to the one-story strip mall, with its huge setbacks from the street, forbidding parking lots, and absence of apartments over stores. Financing is another impediment: banks are reluctant to back anything but conventional sprawl development. Forget about building a new Main Street; it's both illegal and prohibitively expensive.

Kunstler does not seem to expect the New Urbanism to succeed on its own merits. But he does suggest that a return to towns and cities may eventually be forced by the end of cheap gasoline. Ironically, the Disney Corporation, which comes in for some abuse in this book, exhibits more faith than Kunstler in the possibility of selling the idea to the American public. The much-hyped new town of Celebration that Disney is building in Orlando, Florida, is practically a textbook example of New Urbanist construction.

—Steven Lagerfeld

Religion & Philosophy

MARY THROUGH THE CENTURIES:
Her Place in the History of Culture.

By Jaroslav Pelikan. Yale University Press. 240 pp. \$25

Vestiges of Mary, the mother of Jesus, are not as ubiquitous as those of her son, from whose birth (approximately) we date our checks and our letters. But traces of Mary's prominence are not hard to find: witness this

past summer's *Hunchback of Notre Dame* or, in high culture, the recordings of medieval Marian music by the Anonymous 4, which have repeatedly gone to the top of the classical charts.

Do only vestiges remain? Not according to the distinguished Yale religions historian Jaroslav Pelikan. His new book—a short, suitable companion to his earlier *Jesus through the Centuries* (1985)—concludes by