

Tilling and Keeping – Ekklesia Project Gathering 2014
Urban Prolepses: Sacred Anticipation and Sacred Presence in the City
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Introduction: Creation / Crisis / City of God

Creation:

Man as an Intermediate Being:

part of Nature, transcending Nature

implies both the ability and the obligation to steward Nature

Responsibilities of Stewardship:

knowing nature, caring for nature, improving nature, telling nature's story

Crisis I:

General Crisis: Man and Nature as Fallen

Crises of Modernity: massive urbanization / environmental, social and cultural disarray

Related environmental issues: sprawl, flooding and wastewater problems

Related social issues: stagnant economy; declining net birth rates with increase of births outside of marriage and the decline of two-parent families; decline of the middle class with corresponding concentration of wealth in a new hereditary meritocracy (sic)

City of God:

New Jerusalem / City of God as place of ultimate human flourishing

Grace perfects Nature: Earthly cities as prolepses that both anticipate and sacramentally participate in the City of God

Chicago as historically paradigmatic and historically instructive

The Challenge: Bringing Christian anthropology and classical humanism to contemporary urbanism

City and country as agrarian / urban unit [William Cronon . . . and Aristotle]

Two projects:

- Big Picture Vision: *After Burnham: The Notre Dame Plan of Chicago 2109*
 - imagining an alternative urban future informed by classical humanist urbanism and Catholic Social Teaching
- Remedial intervention strategy for contemporary churches (“Ecclesiastical Sprawl Repair”)

Three Themes

1) Metropolitan Chicago as rural / urban unit

local agriculture / passive rural wastewater treatment

range of settlement types, organized around public transportation

2) Marking the sacred in the city

Big city scale: Reviving Burnham's Civic Center / recapturing real estate in interstate ROWs

Neighborhood parish scale

3) Practical strategies for congregations to be better urban stewards

master-plan sprawl repair (Bess, DeGreve, Grenfell / Bootsma)

(immediate goal: get 10% of your congregation within walking distance in five years)