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## No Children Allowed — No Kidding

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It should seem obvious that one key determinant of a society's future prospects is its attitude toward children. The formula is quite simple — no children . . . no future.

Keep this in mind when you read the August 13, 2006 edition of *The New York Times Magazine*. In "Childproof," Christopher Caldwell traces the rise and spread of adult-only (or "age qualified") communities in America.

From his article:

*There are places in America where most of the newly built housing cannot be occupied by families with children. These families won't be living, for instance, in the 242-acre tract planned for Kissimmee, Fla., of which a city administrator boasted, "The beauty of that is: No impact on schools." Such communities are, in real estate parlance, "age qualified."*

*The mighty fortress of anti-discrimination law and custom has an exception when it comes to satisfying the wishes of older people. And builders, residents and local governments are exploiting it. Gated communities, condo complexes and plain old suburban neighborhoods can, provided they meet certain criteria, legally bar children under 18 as residents — or even, in some cases, as visitors. According to Big Builder magazine, such communities are the hottest trend in the residential housing market. There are already thousands of age-qualified "lifestyle communities," and their growth is accelerating.*

What are we to make of this? In some of these "communities," children are not even allowed to visit.

Consider this statement from one resident: "I love children," said one homeowner. "But when you get to be a certain age, you want to be in a community where people around you are the same age you are." *Really?* We should not want to live in communities of people the same age as ourselves — no matter what the age might be. Indeed, the very suggestion mocks the word "community." Perhaps the word "compound" would be more appropriate.

Note also that this discrimination goes only one way. Thankfully, it would not be legal to develop a community in which the aged are excluded. This discrimination is directed only at children and the "breeders" who produce them.

As stated above, this vision mocks the idea of community. Further, the mindset threatens to weaken further the social compact that holds civilization together. The entire culture has an interest in its children — and a responsibility.

For Christians, an article like this ought to remind us once again of the priority of ecclesiology and of the inter-generational character of the people of God. Age-qualified churches are a bigger scandal than age-qualified residential developments. A church consisting only of young adults, youth, married couples, or senior adults is not a true community at all.

SEE ALSO: "[No Brats Allowed!, Is American Society Increasingly Intolerant of Tots?](#)," *MSNBC*, August 15, 2006.

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